

# THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN THE MODERN WORLD

## A PREPARATORY STUDY

for the

World Conference of Christian Youth

Amsterdam, Holland, July 25-August 3, 1939

by

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and

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## THE COLLABORATING INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENTS

The World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, 52, *Rue des Pâquis, Geneva, Switzerland.*

The Universal Christian Council for Life and Work, 41, *Avenue de Champel, Geneva, Switzerland.*

The Continuation Committee of the World Conference on Faith and Order, *Cheyney Court, Winchester, England.*

The International Missionary Council, *Edinburgh House, 2 Eaton Gate, London, S.W.I.*

The World's Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations, 52, *Rue des Pâquis, Geneva, Switzerland.*

The World's Young Women's Christian Association, 52, *Rue des Pâquis, Geneva, Switzerland.*

The World's Student Christian Federation, 13, *Rue Calvin, Geneva, Switzerland.*

Other international Christian bodies collaborating through their national branches.

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Further information concerning the Conference may be secured from the international headquarters of any of these bodies or from the Conference Headquarters : 52, *Rue des Pâquis, Geneva, Switzerland.*

## PREFACE

*This Study Outline has been prepared in order to help the delegates, as well as those many other young people whom these delegates will represent, to prepare for the World Conference of Christian Youth to be held in the Summer of 1939 at Amsterdam.*

*The Conference Committee expresses the hope that Christian youth groups all over the world will share in the process of spiritual and intellectual preparation for the World Conference, of which the publication of this Outline marks the beginning. The fifteen hundred who will meet in Amsterdam in 1939 should be able to consider themselves as ambassadors of the whole community of Christian Youth, and this will be possible only if Christian Youth everywhere are willing to look upon this coming gathering as a matter of personal concern.*

*The objective of that Conference has been formulated as follows: — "The Conference will gather representative young members and leaders of the youth work of the Churches and of all national and international Christian youth movements. It aims at confronting Youth with the results of the world gatherings of the Christian Churches and the Christian youth movements in the years 1937 and 1938. Its purpose is to mobilize Youth to witness to the reality of the Christian Community as the God-given supra-national body to which has been entrusted the message of the victory of Jesus Christ over the world's spiritual, political and social confusion."*

*In line with this general objective, the present Study*



*Outline describes the main issues which have been faced by the various world meetings of the Churches and of the Christian youth movements, and the common answers which have emerged. It deals therefore with difficult and complicated matters, and its great value lies in its attempt to present these matters in a simplified but not over-simplified form.*

*Although its subject-matter includes many questions which will undoubtedly be discussed at the Conference itself, the Outline should not be taken as a document which contains the Conference programme. That programme has still to be worked out, and will reflect not only the results of the oecumenical meetings of the last years, but also the convictions and preoccupations of the various collaborating Christian youth movements at the time of meeting.*

*This document is oecumenical in the sense that it has grown out of a process of contacts and discussions between representatives of many different Christian confessions. But in its underlying theology it represents, of course, one of the viewpoints which are represented in the oecumenical movement and which will be represented in the 1939 Conference. An "oecumenical" theology does not exist, and as long as it does not exist, we can do no better than to express our own convictions as clearly and strongly as possible. There are many among us who will find this particular theology either too "conservative" or too "liberal", too "Catholic" or too "Protestant", but if they feel at all called to seek for the unity of the Christian Community, they will have to agree that the unfamiliarity of this approach should be an added reason for them to take this document seriously. We go to the 1939 Conference not in order to seek confirmation of the opinions which we have always held, but in order to seek together for the new light*

which God may give us as we let ourselves be confronted together by His revelation.

It may well be that in a number of Churches or nations this document will have to be modified more or less radically in order to be useful for the groups for which it is intended. But it is urged that in such cases the adaptation should not take the form of accepting only what is already generally held by the younger Christians of that particular Church or country. Preparation for our oecumenical meeting means preparing ourselves for the shock of meeting with the unfamiliar, at first often irritating convictions of our fellow-Christians. If an adapted or simplified Outline is devised to suit local conditions, it is therefore advisable to make this present Outline available to the leaders of groups and to those who will be delegates to the Conference itself.

In order to facilitate further study, questions as well as a short bibliography are attached. To read the books mentioned in this bibliography will also mean an effort for nearly all who try it. It is not that any of these books is particularly difficult to read, but rather that several of them will strike them as containing strange and new ideas. But the result will be worth the trouble. For this kind of study will help them to grow in a real understanding of the task which lies before the present generation of younger Christians which is nothing less than the rediscovery of the "unity of faith" which is "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ".

Executive Committee for the Conference :

R. H. EDWIN ESPY	H. L. HENRIOD	TRACY STRONG
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## INTRODUCTION

It has already become a truism to say that the world today is physically more united and spiritually more divided than ever before. It is unnecessary to enlarge upon the marvels of technical progress by which time and space have been conquered — at a speed which has made it difficult to adjust quickly enough the focus of our mental vision. It is necessary to say a little more about the forces which produced chaos and division in the spirit of man during the same period.

For the last four hundred years, Western thought has been dominated, not by the vision of God (as in the so-called "Dark Ages") but by a vision of man. That vision saw man as a free individual (cf. Descartes' *Cogito, ergo sum* and Rousseau's *Contrat social*), as a rational animal (cf. the growth and progress of science and the scientific method), and minimized the importance of other elements in man's make-up. It would be foolish to try to minimize the great positive achievements inspired by this vision (cf. also Section IV). But the growing predominance of this vision had certain serious results. First, it deprived man of the most powerful cohesive force he had had — the acknowledgment of a generally-recognized supreme authority and standard of values — the Will of God — as something above and beyond man's relative authorities and imperfect standards. This left the bolder and more "progressive" spirits free to do what was

right in their own eyes (for were they not "free individuals" who must have "self-expression" at all costs?). Secondly, it greatly diminished man's sense of social cohesion and responsibility — as the slums of nineteenth-century industrialism testify — so that it has come as a new and surprising philosophical "discovery" in our own time that personal relations and social responsibilities are the primary data of man's experience (cf. Buber's *I and Thou* and Heim's and Grisebach's work as interpreted by Oldham). Thirdly, it wilfully ignored or suppressed all the irrational (i.e. unclassifiable, incomprehensible, unruly) elements in human life, both individual and social, thus smothering a vital spark which has had to break out with disconcerting violence in the "disreputable" writings of the Vitalists (such as D. H. Lawrence), the irrational symbolic art of the Surrealists, the sensuous, dynamic rhythm of the "hot jazz" and "swing" schools of dance music, and the Freudian school of psychoanalysis.

This period is now drawing to a close. The supremacy of the particular vision of man just described is being challenged on many hands. We have already noted the philosophical and psychological reactions (which will repay further study). But even more obviously important are the reactions which are having the greatest influence on the lives of Youth — communism and fascism or nationalism.

Before dealing with these reactions, however, we must shortly describe the effect upon the Youth of today of the dominant attitude to life which has just been described.

First of all, the Youth of today knows without being told that all the old traditional landmarks, safeguards and sanctions of good and evil, right and wrong, are being widely decried as antiquated or hypocritical or

else disregarded as unnecessary or inadequate. And since the prevalent individualism has robbed it of any sense of responsible membership in an organic community to which it is of interest and value, it is not surprising if it finds its moral strains and stresses intolerable.

Secondly, the Youth of today is in grave danger of being bludgeoned into a passive acquiescence of materialism and materialistic standards of value by the growing influence of great city-life, with its commercial morality (exploitation of the "blackcoated workers" less noticed but possibly more bitter and hopeless than that of the manual workers), idolatry of luxury (cinemas, shop-fronts, advertisements), worship of technique for its own sake (exaggerated admiration for technical record-breaking). And the struggle for mere existence leaves quite inadequate time or energy for coping with the vast and overwhelming meaninglessness of life. So most stop thinking and acquiesce ; some go on thinking without guidance or help, and end in defiance or despair (suicide statistics are relevant here) ; some find release and a new incentive for life in allegiance to the new solutions of communism or nationalism ; a few come to see quite clearly that the Christian Community is the only place where the tension can be borne without giving in, and that the reason why it is the only place is that it is dominated by a vision of God, and so has a clear vision of man.

Most of this Outline will consist of a study of the special nature and responsibility of the Christian Community, especially of its Youth, in this situation.

This can be done, however, only if we see *why* the other answers to the problem (communism and nationalism) are awakening so widespread a response, *what* their real aim is, and *where* they come short.

Why, then, do these reactions awaken so widespread a response ? Certainly not because they merely command intellectual assent. Their driving force is far deeper than that. Coming at a time of disillusionment with individualism and rationalism, they have satisfied two profound instinctive cravings of the human soul — the desire and need to know oneself to be something more than an isolated individual : a responsible member in an organic community ; and the desire and need to have a cause to live and die for — a cause which can call forth the response of the inarticulate and subconscious forces of the soul in unquestioning devotion. For that reason, the loss of any superficial rights of "free speech" or "free opinion" weighs very light (in the estimation of the adherents of these movements) as compared with the far deeper and more satisfying freedom of service to the cause of community. It is not to a theory but to a mystical vision of the mission of their nation (blood, race and soil) or their class (the world mission of the proletariat) that they have devoted themselves. So no theoretical objections will halt them on their way. The only adequate answer to them is a greater vision and a truer community.

What, now, are the aims of these reactions ? There are two important points in the answer to this question.

First, their aims are in intention positive, creative and constructive. It is not their primary intention or their main goal to produce destruction, bloodshed and war. For their own members they intend prosperity and peace. They make a potent protest against the leaderlessness, spinelessness and desintegration to which rationalist individualism had led. As efforts at reconstruction, their power within their own limits is incalculable. If they do lead to conflict and

destruction, that happens in their external relations with *other* groups or communities of which they have not taken adequate account.

Secondly, their real aim is *community*. The myth of the isolated individual and the social contract has been exploded ; it is more clearly seen that we are members one of another, and that society must become more organic, mutually-supporting and interdependent than it now is. The classless society and the corporative society are attempts to translate this vision into reality.

Where do they come short, then ? Why are they leading to chaos as well as order, to disruption as well as community ?

It is, of course, true that any great change from one order to another cannot occur painlessly. The old order does not yield without a struggle. It is most important that we should see the change coming and be ready for it — not clinging to the old, or imagining that men are fighting against God and His order just because they happen to be making us uncomfortable. No security which has injustice built into its foundations can endure for ever. And it is a thing to rejoice at that in our day so many false securities are being shaken.

But the situation cannot be dismissed as simply as that. For there are disquieting symptoms in the way in which the change is being brought about.

The most disquieting thing of all is the complete lack of any transcendent standard of reference or standard of values which is taken seriously as a check upon self-interest in determining practical policy. The would-be answers to the craving of mankind for community have not carried their reaction far enough back. They are still dominated by a vision of man, as the whole period from which they come has been ;



they have not recovered the vision of God without which the perspective and proportion of human affairs are faulty. And so communism is just as plutocratic (i.e., dominated by material wealth) as the capitalism it abhors ; and so nationalism is just as blind to the rights and needs of others as the order was against which it rebelled. Having no faith, they have no forgiveness ; and their constructive aim has a destructive ending. They fail in brotherhood towards those who differ from them.

The problem thus created cannot be solved by any secular internationalism ; for any internationalism which knows no allegiance to an authority above and beyond itself is unstable, subject to the domination of the powerful, and quite as incapable of securing a just and peaceful order as either of the two attempts we have been considering.

The only way to show humanity the way in which it can, *if it will* (for here comes in the tragic freedom of man, and the choice for or against faith in God — a choice which we cannot make for others), be saved from the cruelty and rapacity which must follow from unquestioning allegiance to a class, nation or race which acknowledges no authority greater than itself — the only way is to bear a convincing witness to a basis for a community life which goes beyond differences of race, nation or class, and takes the sting out of those conflicts which are inevitable.

This witness to the way to true community is the kind of evangelism most urgently needed today. It is the unique privilege, responsibility and opportunity of the Christian Community that it is in a position to bear such a witness — not through any merit of its own, but through the forgiving love of God in Jesus Christ which called it into being.

The most important thing about the Christian Com-

munity and its message is that it is not just an answer to the world's problems. It puts a problem to the world. But it is not a human problem this time ; it is God's problem. It is through the Christian Community and its message that God asks the world : "Where are you ? What are you doing ? Where are you going ?" as He asked Adam long ago. And it is through the Christian Community that He conveys to the world the extraordinary, baffling and overwhelming Good News of His forgiving love, and proclaims that it is only through acceptance of that love by faith in Jesus Christ, and a life of gratitude and devotion flowing from that faith, that man can find true peace and true community.

This "Christian Revolution" changes the perspective of human affairs completely. The Christian Community of those who have thus been turned upside down (from the world's point of view) or right side up (from their own new God-given point of view) no longer judge what they are to think about God and man by the standard of world problems, but judge what they are to think about world problems by the standard of their faith in God. And that is the only perspective in which human beings and human affairs can be rightly seen and rightly judged, and the only way in which human conflicts can be patiently borne and justly resolved. It is the only adequate basis for a life of true community.

The whole of the rest of this Outline ought to be seen and studied in the light of what has just been said. For its various sections study only different aspects of the same thing. And that thing is *not* a problem. It is a *vocation* : a calling of God. This Outline can only provide some of the materials for answering such questions as : What kind of life does God want His Community to live ? What kind of

message does He want it to give, here and now in this world ? But the fundamental fact that the Christian Community is called of God does not stand in question at all. And if we are only expectant enough and ready enough, the answer to our questions will be given, not by this Outline but by Him.

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## SECTION I

### A CREED TO LIVE BY

#### "I believe"

The introduction brought out the three outstanding factors in the present situation : first, the breakdown of long-accepted standards of belief and principles of conduct ; secondly, men's craving for a "creed" to give their lives direction and meaning, and the answering of that craving by the great movements of communism and nationalism ; thirdly, the existence of the Christian Community with the challenge of its God-given faith. To these three elements correspond the three possibilities for the future of mankind, indicated by Sir Walter Moberly in a recent sobering and challenging speech : either the collapse of present-day civilization ; or the acceptance of one of the new faiths and the gradual return to paganism with all that this implies ; or the revival of Christianity on a scale and at an intensity quite beyond anything its leadership is today humanly capable of visualizing. Is Christianity prepared to meet such a challenge ?

In its history Christianity has been called upon not only to conserve the spark of a painfully-won civilization but to give direction and dynamic to a disintegrating world. It can again render this service to mankind. But if it is again to become a life-directing force in the world, its followers — the rank and file

as well as those who are called upon to give leadership — will need to rediscover the essential nature of those great historical facts without which the ethical teachings of Christianity have neither meaning nor power : the great basic truths of Christianity which have been summarized in the Apostles' Creed. Many have put this ancient declaration of faith aside as a theological formulation which long since has become obsolete. While the declaration as we have it today was put into final form by a great Church Council, its main lines were clearly stated during the Apostolic days ; and we will not grasp either its meaning or its significance for the Church unless we remind ourselves that it was born out of the life and death struggle of a new faith with the paganisms of the time. Its articles were the minimum emergency rations with which a handful of men went out to do battle with overwhelming odds. Seen in this light this ancient declaration takes on new meaning for our day. It makes us see the folly of trying to bring order into a chaotic world by beginning with an examination of our own petty needs and problems. By sweeping us past all these things to the eternal God it confronts us first with the Eternal Verities and then shows us man's place in God's continuous creative act. We believe that the Christian of today will find it a natural starting point for the facing of old problems in new settings.

“In God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven  
and Earth”

To know God, and to understand the principles on which He founded this Universe in which we live, is a matter of primary concern to everyone sincerely interested in the establishment of those relationships

which are essential to any sound social or international order. The value of our discussions of the baffling problems which are set forth in later sections of this Study will be determined largely by the degree to which we realize this fact.

When we read the opening sentence of the Creed in the light of the whole of this superb declaration of faith, there is born in our minds a conception of God which makes us see Him not only as Almighty Creator and Ruler, but also as Loving Father and Redeemer. With this approach we see Him first of all as personal rather than as "force" or "thing" or "process". We see Him as the Creator to whom all things and persons He has made rightfully belong and owe allegiance, and who enters into the life of those made in His image to reveal to them conditions of creative fellowship and community. We see Him as Redeemer — as one ready and able to forgive those who have abused their God-given freedom. More than that, we see Him as a searching, loving God whose happiness is bound up with the well-being of His creation. But we must not ignore the fact that since the world in which we live is established on revealed moral principles, there is a judgment of God which becomes active in the events of history as well as in individual life.

Once man grasps this larger conception of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, he sees that God claims Lordship over the life of society as well as over individual life. It is one thing to think of God as personal; it is quite another thing to think of Him as having the personality qualities revealed in Christ. It is one thing to think of God as personal but apart; it is another thing to understand the possibility and the secret of man's fellowship with Him. It is one thing to know that men should live in harmony with

one another ; it is another thing to know that the self-giving spirit of Jesus is the only basis on which sound communal relations can be built. In the revelation of God in Christ we have not only a revelation of His personality and the conditions of fellowship, but the assurance of His personal concern for the enrichment of the lives of those created in His image.

Throughout the centuries serious and almost continuous efforts have been made to explain God and to fathom His nature and purpose through philosophical argument, and through a study of the manifestations of God in the natural world. In these recent years many have also sought to define God in terms of the knowable facts in science, and some have carried this approach to the point of making God merely an impersonal integrating force within the Cosmic process. In the two most recent series of Gifford Lectures, William Temple, Archbishop of York, has again surveyed the manifestation of God in the natural world by the methods which have come to be known as "Natural Theology", but he closes his monumental study with this thought-provoking observation :

"Natural theology can assure man that there is a God who both claims and deserves his worship ; it may bid him to seek that God and the way to worship Him ; but it cannot confront him with the God whom it describes... Natural theology, which is indispensable as a source of interpretation and as a purge of superstition, ends in a hunger which it cannot satisfy... It ends in a hunger for that Divine Revelation which it began by excluding from its purview... Man can know the nature of God only as he can prove by the experiment of life what manner of voice it was that spoke : "Come unto me... and I will give you rest."

This is the theologian-philosopher's way of saying

that our deeper understanding of God must after all come from our understanding of God's revelation of Himself through His Son. The key to our understanding of the Christian conception of human life and relations, lies in our understanding of the meaning of God's breaking into human history through the gift of His Son Jesus Christ. In this fact lies the uniqueness of Christianity.

**"And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord"**

Because of our failure to grasp the larger significance of the coming of Christ we have all too frequently acquired only ethical insight when we should have been experiencing His life-transforming power and discovering the cosmic and social significance of His life, death and resurrection. The coming of Christ into the world is nothing other than God's supreme revelation of Himself and the declaration of His personal interest in the well-being of those whom He created in His image.

For many people, revelation means something "static". This is precisely what the revelation in Christ is not. The secret of the power of the disciples lay, not in the formulae for domestic or social or economic life, which they acquired from Christ in the Sermon on the Mount or similar utterances, but in their acceptance of His Lordship. As Karl Heim puts it, "the essence of Christianity does not lie in a philosophy or a system of doctrine, nor in an ethic, but in a Person". If this is true, the world is perhaps better prepared today for an understanding of Christianity than it has been for centuries, because these recent years have seen the shifting of human loyalties from mere ideas to personalities representing



living ideas. The cold, formal ideas of the Age of Rationalism and of the period of Idealism have been found wanting, and their places have been taken by the names of personalities to whom Youth and maturity alike look for leadership. Men do not long maintain allegiance to static ideas. They must have a dynamic living personality which can give meaning to ideas in a changing world. The age which was ruled by static ideas was incapable of understanding Christianity, because Christianity is built around a living personality rather than a principle, and because Christianity implies a dynamic view of history in which the Kingdom of God is being realized, not in keeping with any fixed form, but ever within the general plan of God which is determined by His laws of human relationships.

During His brief ministry, Christ dealt concretely with the everyday problems of His time, but He never formulated a system of ethics or an economic or social programme which would have validity for all time. What He did was to invite men into a community of which He was the centre ; and to those who would accept the conditions of fellowship in this community He promised the continued guidance of the Spirit whom He would send. To quote Karl Heim again : "The power with which Jesus binds His own to Himself is neither the compulsion of human organization nor the allurements of a future reward, but wholly and solely the invisible magnetism which issued from His Person ; that Divine authority from which no one can escape who has once come under its influence."

Every part of what Jesus Christ was and did, is and does, is thus of vital significance for our faith and life. His birth, and the manner of it (the Incarnation), is what tells us that the God who made us is not an

absentee landlord but One who cares enough about His world to enter into it at its point of greatest need. His life and teaching, which gave continual offence to the pride and self-satisfaction of men, also showed God's standard of values in judging human life and achievement, and set up the revolutionary aristocracy of the Beatitudes. His sufferings and death (the Atonement) showed up the full consequences of human self-will, bore them and conquered them by unwavering love, and so opened the way for men to a new and undreamt-of communion with God and community with one another. His resurrection carries His victory beyond death, and opens up new perspectives and hopes of life. His ascension shows us that the real centre of gravity of human life is not where we are inclined to think it, but elsewhere, and that visible, material things and forces do not have the last word in determining human destiny. His presence with His Church is the source of all her life. His coming again in glory tells us of the fulfilment of the cycle of birth and decay which is human life, and of the conclusive establishment of Divine standards in estimating human life.

In the Incarnation and the Cross we have God's revelation of the way in which His purpose for His universe is to be achieved. In such a world vague talk about the Love of God is useless. We mortals are God's instruments and His power can be exerted through us only as we meet the conditions of creative action presented in the Cross. "If any one would come after Me, let him take up his cross". These are the severe conditions which God places for those who would share in His work. We become capable of entering helpfully into the world's suffering and confusion only as we grasp the demanding conditions of the Cross.

In our understanding of the meaning of the Cross and the Resurrection lies, furthermore, the way to an understanding of one of life's deepest mysteries — the meaning and the place of pain and suffering in the world. Suffering seen only in its physical sense leads to disappointment and despair. Seen in the light of the Cross and the Resurrection it acquires creative value. In the words of Karl Barth, "what seems at first sight to be human suffering becomes the action of God the Creator and Redeemer... Our tribulation, without ceasing to be tribulation, is transformed... The road which is impassable has been made known to us in the crucified and risen Lord."

And in this fact of the Resurrection some of the mysteries of the Kingdom are given deeper meaning. By the gift of His Son, God broke into human history, and His Kingdom came into our midst. Christ is in us as members of His Church; yet the Kingdom is still in the future. He has shown us the way of redemption, but He has not made manifest what we may become through Him. The Kingdom does not come by any regular process of expansion. The wheat and tares still grow together, and the mystery of the place and the power of iniquity still continues. The answer to this problem as well as the answer to the search for the secret of victorious individual and social living must be sought in the fact of the death and the resurrection of Christ.

### "I believe in the Holy Ghost"

The life of many modern Christians has been impoverished because one of the central facts of Christianity has been hidden behind what is for many an uninviting façade. If the previous parts of the Creed bring

us face to face with the great fact of God, the Creator and Redeemer, this section is intended to make us see the reality of God's presence with His people, and the ceaseless activity of His all-embracing love. There is living reality behind this "ghostly" phrase.

The rediscovery of the meaning of this article of the Creed will do much to help us understand God's way of participating in the every-day affairs of man. God is ever striving to restore men to personal fellowship with Himself. Through the ages He has spoken through His prophets and apostles. In the fullness of time His Word was made flesh and His purpose for mankind was made manifest in the redeeming work, in the words and deeds, in the life and character, and in the suffering, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God. His culminating act was the gift of the Holy Spirit, through which He is ever present in the life of the living Church and in the lives of those who strive to live in communion and fellowship with Him.

When we try to understand the nature of God's revelation of Himself in Christ, we must think in terms not only of His revelation of Himself and of His ideals for His world at a definite time in history, but of His never-ending outpouring of the power of the Spirit on those who are willing to renounce their claim to self-determination and meet the conditions of fellowship and community which Jesus Christ proclaimed and demonstrated during His earthly ministry. The pages of the New Testament are replete with the records of the lives of men who discovered the reality of this relationship and the richness of life lived in this God-inspired fellowship. God's revelation in Christ is therefore not a static authority imposed from without but a living relationship between man and a dynamic personality ever ready to reveal to man God's

larger plans within which man may exercise his God-given freedom.

The assurance of the presence and inspiration of the Holy Spirit was given especially to the Church and to those who are called to be the ministers of the Word, but it was granted also to every humble and responsive spirit. And God has not revealed Himself only in the past. His Word is coming in ever-renewed form through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and it is the never-ending task of the Church and its individual members to bear witness through word and life to God's continuing revelation of Himself. It is true that God's redemptive purpose for mankind is fully disclosed in His supreme revelation ; but in the words of the Edinburgh Conference of the Churches, "every age has its own problems and its own difficulties, and it is the work of the Spirit in every age to apply the one truth revealed in Christ to the circumstances of the time. Moreover, as past experience shows, these new applications bring to the Church a new understanding of the truth on which they rest."

The need of our day, whether it be in the Church or in the realms of education, industry and commerce, or politics, is for a prophetic leadership capable of seeing human life and relations in their larger cosmic setting. This will come, as it has come in other days of great need, when men are ready to hear what God has to say through His Holy Spirit.

### **"The Holy Catholic Church"**

The Edinburgh Conference on Faith and Order recently defined the Church as "the household of God, the family in which the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man is realized in the children of His

adoption. It is the body of Christ, whose members derive their life and oneness from their one living head ; and thus it is nothing apart from Him, but is in all things dependent upon the power of salvation which God has committed to His Son. " In describing its function it declared that "the Church must proclaim the righteousness of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and thus encourage and guide her members to promote justice, peace, and good-will among all men and through the whole extent of life. The Church is thus called to do battle against the powers of evil and to seek the glory of God in all things, looking to the day when His Kingdom shall come in the fullness of its power. "

But how are the Church and the individual Christian who is seriously concerned with the coming of the Kingdom of God actually to have an influence on the existing social and political order ? The utterances of the Founder of Christianity and the actions of the early Christians make it clear that it was His intention that His Church should be *in the world but not of the world*. But the history of the Churches unfortunately reveals the all too frequent domination of one or the other of two extreme tendencies : aloofness from the world ; and submergence in the world. There is no escaping the fact that for more than two centuries the Churches have been all too ready to conform to the scientific, economic and cultural temper of the area in which they found themselves. As a consequence their methods of work and their theology were marked in certain areas by the "progress" concept, with its humanistic tendencies ; and in other areas by certain political philosophies through too intimate association with the State. While the conflict which is at present being waged between State and Church in so many areas has great temporary dangers inherent in it, and

while the conflict of the Church with Secularism is only in the early stages, Christians have every right to believe that Christianity has within itself not only the power of survival but the power to recreate itself, and that the experiences of these days will serve as a purging of soul and result in a rededication to its supreme task.

But the effective fulfilment of its responsibility to society implies a rediscovery of the true meaning and function of the Church. The Church is something far more real and vital than a convenient federation of individual Christians. It is the Body of Christ and the instrument of God's ongoing revelation through the ages. Individual Christians must be prepared to thrust themselves without reserve into the most needy places of the world, but if they are to continue to work creatively in the larger world they must be able to withdraw periodically into the creative intimacy of a similarly-minded community for sharing, for counsel, for direction, for inspiration, and for that deeper communion with God which comes through communal worship and especially through the medium of the sacrament instituted by Christ in that eventful meeting with His disciples in the upper room.

The whole of the next Section is devoted to a study of the Church as a Community ; so it may be used along with this material for the study of the subject of this Paragraph.

### "The Communion of Saints"

This phrase, which for many smells of candles and incense and departed spirits, carries with it one of the richest and at the same time one of the most realizable concepts of our Christian faith.

The Conference on Faith and Order which recently met in Edinburgh defined this term, which appears so frequently in the Scriptures and is included as one of the articles of the Apostles' Creed, as meaning "all who are 'in Christ' knit together in one fellowship through the Holy Spirit". Further theological definitions may be found in the Report of that Conference. But even apart from that, this article of the Creed, which takes us into the very heart of the meaning of "Community", is one of the most vital and revealing for those of us who are concerned with the establishment of relationships which will transcend social, political and racial barriers.

The Christian faith holds that man finds his fullest realization only in a relationship to other personalities in which all absoluteness is renounced and in which there is mutual respect and a reciprocal sense of responsibility. To state this negatively, Christianity maintains that the individual cannot acquire the qualities of personality except in relationship to other personalities. Christianity, it is true, has always championed the rights of the individual; but in the Christian understanding of individuality, the problems of unbridled individualism are resolved in its conception of individual interdependence. Because of the laws of human and Divine relationships laid down in the Incarnation, Christianity must be opposed to all forms of selfish individualism just as much as to the new collectivism which seek to dominate the soul and the life of man.

In his application of the laws of the Gospel to human relations, man has in these recent man-centred years been all too much inclined to abandon the first essential element of the Great Commandment. He has been willing to preach the need of loving one's neighbour as one's self; but the fact has escaped him that love



of God is the indispensable conditioning factor. Only as men gain mastery over selfishness and self-centredness, through the power of God received and constantly renewed through communion with Him, can they be capable of love of neighbour.

The real significance of this fact becomes clear only as we try to fathom the full meaning of God's revelation of Himself through His Son. God sent His Son, not merely to show us a Way of Life, but rather to seal a personal covenant between Himself and those whom He had created in His image. By this act God admitted man into a life of communion with Himself ; and men become truly responsive persons in human society in so far as they respond to this supreme self-giving act of God. Man's response implies the maintaining of the reality of this fellowship through unbroken communion in worship and through the expression of his love of God and his loyal obedience to God's Will by continuous service to his fellowmen.

That the realization of this Communion of Saints will at best always be imperfect on this earth goes without saying, but it is without question the most adequate formula for the solving of the problems of human relations which man has at his disposal. We will become creative citizens of the social and political order in which we live by the degree to which we become loyal citizens of the Kingdom of God.

### "The Forgiveness of Sins"

This article of the Creed takes us into the very heart of our present-day social and international problems. Unfortunately the reality and the larger significance of sin has been beclouded in these recent years by the fact that the term has been monopolized for

the designation of miscellaneous petty acts which have little in common with those personality-destroying social and international maladjustments and injustices which have their roots in human selfishness. When the history of these recent years is finally written by an honest, searching mind, the disillusionment which has cast its shadow over so many lives, whether it be in the realm of education, social reconstruction, or international relations, will be attributed in many cases to a failure to reckon with the stubborn fact of sin in the lives of men. The elimination of classes has not resulted in the elimination of the self-seeking instincts of man. Man's craving for power and advantages has continued. Even in the new social and political setting he has been prompted by instincts beyond his control to employ the most diabolic and unsocial methods to attain selfish ends. Any Social Order which ignores the fact of human selfishness and sin is doomed to failure; and no scheme, however utopian, can hope to negate the reality of that fact by education or by organizational or environmental changes. Sin is a reality with which only the Grace of God can deal; and Christianity will become creative in the present situation to the degree to which it succeeds in bringing this truth into the consciousness of a confused generation.

This will not be done by reviving the old controversy between individual and social salvation. Stanley Jones has perhaps shown us the way for these times when he points out that in these days men most quickly become conscious of the need for personal salvation when they are confronted with the total change of life demanded in a Social Order in which the ideals of the Kingdom of God are to be realized. He contends that the old-time sense of individual sin

which has so largely disappeared will again return when its corporate implications become clear.

God's Grace is manifest in our creation, preservation and all the blessings of this life, *but above all in our redemption through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.* God bestows His Grace through His Word, through the Sacraments, through the fellowship of the Church which is the Body of Christ, and through the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. The rediscovery of the meaning of the Cross through which God reconciled men unto Himself therefore becomes a matter of both individual and social importance. Men find their way into the presence of God in different ways, but if as Christian Youth we are to make these truths have reality to great numbers we will need to concern ourselves with the problem of showing that the worship which represents and proclaims them is not irrelevant to life but a purposeful communion through which man may enter into a relationship with God which supplies the norm and the motivation for his relationship with his fellow-men in the everyday affairs of life. Such an act of worship will include much less of ethical teaching, important as that may be, and much more of that self-discipline and penitent giving of self which bring man into a personal relationship with a power and a personality greater than his own.

#### "The Resurrection of the Body and the Life Everlasting"

The Christian's declaration of faith closes with this note of absolute trust in the reality, the abiding value and the eternal quality of a life lived in harmony with God's creative purpose. In spite of all disconcerting appearances and relapses ; in spite

of the fact that so much that takes place in his individual life and in the course of history must be discarded, the Christian recognizes the progressive though uneven realization and fulfilment of God's Divine plan and of his continued participation in the creative work of God.

Thus this closing vision of the Creed is not a note of retreat but a challenge to creative living and action. It declares that however adverse conditions may appear to be, Christians must never doubt the final achievement of God's purpose for His universe. It implies that every act, public or private, does something to hasten or retard the coming of the Kingdom. All selfish acts in public or private life, which make for international or class hatred or strife ; all second-best standards of thought and action ; yes, even silent acquiescence in wrong : all these help to hold it back. And, as Evelyn Underhill puts it, "Each Godward glance translated into sacrificial action, each deed inspired by generosity, each deliberate contradiction of self-interest and self-will, helps it on." We are all too prone to try to escape responsibility in these things by declaring to ourselves and to others that what we poor mortals do can have no bearing on abstract and unwieldy things like the Social Order or the World Order, and certainly not on the coming of the Kingdom. We forget too easily that the most powerful world-movement in history was inaugurated by a handful of ordinary men who had nothing but love and devotion to give, but who were willing to stake their reputations and life itself on the belief that by sharing their experience of the saving and transforming power of Christ they could reveal to men the way to the more abundant life and thus make their lives have a practical import for the life of their times.

The closing words of the Creed constitute the decla-

ration of faith of those who believe that man may enter into everlasting fellowship with the eternal, unchanging God who accomplishes His creative work through those whom He created in His image. Through the gift of His Son, God reconciled the world to Himself ; through the establishment of His Church, which is His Body, Christ shared the Resurrection with His followers and instituted "a new Order of Creation in which the powers of another world entered into the life of men".

The greatest change which this article of the Creed brings is a change of perspective. For those who affirm it can no longer regard that portion of their life which is carried on within "the body of this death" as an end in itself. They no longer see the goal to be striven for in human life as being simply that of the organization of collective happiness on this earth. They see it as the vision of God — for which this life is of decisive and eternal importance. With the hope and promise of that vision they will work to free men from their material *and* spiritual chains as they never would if they had only collective happiness in view. For the truly human life, seen in the infinite perspectives thus disclosed, is a life in which men are set free from outward and inward obstacles, not in order to fulfil their own desires, but to serve the Will of God in freedom in this world, and in the world to come to see Him face to face.

### Conclusion

Arnold Toynbee, the English historian, contends that in its brief history Christianity has repeatedly succeeded in placing the conduct of mankind "in the gigantic setting of infinity and eternity, and by opening

its eyes to this vast spiritual vision, it has called out the deepest spiritual energies of man ". A deepened understanding of the inexhaustible wealth of insight into life and power over life which is given by the whole Gospel of God, summarized in the Creed we have just been studying, will not only deliver us from the overwhelming sense of the meaninglessness of life which is crushing thousands of Youth today, but also give us power to overcome those false but potent "this-worldly" faiths which are misleading millions more.

Suggested Questions  
for use in Discussion Groups in National Areas

1. To what extent is the question of the meaning of life a disturbing problem for the Youth of my nations ? Is it an increasing or a diminishing problem ? Which of the "ideologies" of our day is the Youth of my nation finding most appealing ?
2. To what extent do the Christian Youth of my country think of God as Redeemer as well as Creator ? To what extent do they understand Christ as revealer of God and of His purpose for mankind ? To what extent do they understand and recognize Christ as Saviour ; as the One capable of transforming and directing human life ?
3. What bearing does belief in the God of the Christian faith have on my attitude toward the race problem ?
4. To what extent is the social and political life of my nation in conflict with the "personality" and "relationship" concepts revealed in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ ?
5. How can our worship services be made to contribute in a larger way toward helping men to practice the presence of God ?

6. Is the Church at present exerting a determining influence on the social and political life of my nation ? What should be its attitude and its action ? How can it be active in the world without being of the world ?
  7. Is the Christian conception of community realizable for limited groups here and now ? What might be the influence of such vital, practising groups on the larger Social Order ?
  8. To what extent does the Youth of my nation recognize the reality of the New Testament conception of Sin ? Does it recognize Christ as redeemer of mankind or has it come to think of Him primarily as teacher and example ? Can Christian Youth exert a creative influence on the Social Order without witnessing to His redeeming power and His saving Grace ?
  9. Those who have been privileged to work on this Preparatory Study Outline have found their study of the Creed an enriching and a revealing experience. We believe that all who will make a reasonable effort to discover the deeper, and the sometimes almost hidden meaning of its concentrated phrases, will be equally rewarded. It would facilitate the preparation of further study materials if individuals and groups would send in brief statements on what an intensified study of this ancient declaration of faith has meant to them.
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## SECTION II

### THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AS A COMMUNITY

The Introduction has already indicated in general terms the need and desire for life in community which is the most characteristic feature of the modern situation. Our task in this section must be to work out in greater detail the answer to that need and desire which the Church of Christ is called to give : a showing forth of God's true and living way to reconciliation and brotherhood, and also of the terms (repentance : surrender of self-will ; and faith : acceptance of God's Will) on which alone that Way can be found.

It is important to see at the start that the application of community-ideas to the Church of Christ is not a hasty invention of modern times inspired by secular models. Rather do the very imperfect secular models simply open our eyes to see a treasure which the Church already possessed, but to which she had been bearing unconvincing witness. So what we have to do is to look to the rock whence we are hewn.

#### The Biblical Basis

Already in the Old Testament we see that God's way of carrying out His purpose in the life of the world is through a community — first the Chosen People, and then (when disloyalty made punishment inevitable) the Elect Remnant.



The concentration of God's Purpose in the Person, Life and Work and Death and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ signifies, not the abandonment, but the fulfilment of this community method. For in the first place, our Lord knew Himself to be in His proper Person the embodiment of the Elect Remnant as the instrument entirely devoted to the Will of God. And in the second place, our Lord's own method of perpetuating His work was, on its human side, the preparation of a community for an equally complete devotion. And in the third place, the Resurrection appearances are all intimately bound up with that community, once sad, now joyful, but as yet uncertain of aim; and the great Commission and Promise to the Church (the eleven disciples) of Matt. xxviii, 18-20 are framed in community terms.

This is entirely borne out by the story of the Early Church in the Acts and Epistles. Not only was the method of evangelization employed that of the formation of communities, but these communities themselves were conscious of their solidarity with one another by reason of the forgiving love which God had shown them in Jesus Christ, and the faith and hope and love and devotion to the Will of God which were their spontaneous response. The two outstanding testimonies to the quality of this community life are the "communism" of Acts ii, 44-45 (sad that the word "communism" has been prostituted to serve the false god of economic determinism and historical materialism!) and the "collection for the saints" of Acts xi, 27-30 and I Cor. xvi, 1-4. And it is especially noteworthy that some of the chief sanctions against wrongdoing (cf. I Cor. v, 11-13) and exhortations to considerate action (e. g. I Cor. viii, especially 10-13) refer to this community consciousness.

Our true heritage, then, is a community life which

is one organic living whole — whose unity involves wholeness of faith as well as connexion of the parts in space and time. It is in the light of that true heritage — of a universal, organic, living community which makes the first claim on our loyalty before any of the lesser communities, national, racial, class, international — that we shall see our modern problems in true perspective and judge them aright. It is to describe that true heritage that we are today using the word *oecumenical* — a word which comes from the Greek phrase for the “inhabited world”, as used by the writer to the Hebrews (e. g. I, 6 and II, 5), and has fewer distracting and misleading associations than such a word as “catholic” would have. The word *oecumenical* was used to describe the Councils of the undivided Church which represented the whole of Christendom and (among other things) drew up the classic Creeds of the Church. It is used today to describe a movement which, while recognizing the fact and the serious nature of the divisions of Christendom, yet affirms its faith in the One Holy Catholic Church, and attempts to give practical and visible expression to that faith by seeking to promote sympathetic understanding of agreements and differences in faith and order, and cooperation in life and work. The “oecumenical movement” is thus one of the most striking acts of faith and witness being made by Christendom today. (Cf. also Section V, paragraph on “The Christian and the World of Nations”.)

It needs no emphasis that the Churches have not always been true to their heritage. The deepest meaning of orthodoxy is a great and inspiring one ; it is a life of giving glory to the true God in the right way ; but when love has grown cold, and the organic view of the Church has been lost, orthodoxy has

appeared as a heavy burden and grievous to be borne. Today, however, there are signs in all the confessions of Christendom of a renewal of understanding of the deep things of God just at this point. This is brought out in Section II, "A Creed to Live by", in the Paragraph on the Church, to which reference should here be made.

### The Stumbling-block of Disunity

But before we can go any further, we must face frankly the stumbling-block of disunity. We speak of "the Church and the Churches"; but the plural now means something quite different from what it did in the New Testament. There, it meant the various local expressions of the one Church of God; here, it means the various confessional bodies divided alike in faith and in order. Something is not as it should be. What is it? And what is to be done about it?

There are of course any number of relative differences, such as that between an institutional and a personal view of the Church, or that between an orthodox and a liberal view of the faith or of the Bible. But these differences appear to be insurmountable cleavages only because they have been exaggerated or aggravated by two main external causes; in themselves, when rightly interpreted, they are complementary and not exclusive in character.

The aggravating causes are: first, the very existence of Christian bodies in separation; and secondly, the individualism of the period of Western history which is just ending — the period of scientific and rationalistic humanism which began with the Renaissance and has dominated Western thought ever since. The first of these has naturally tended to increase and

perpetuate differences, since each separate body inclines to regard itself as the trustee of certain truths which others have forgotten, and to give those truths an over-emphasis which falsifies its own witness and makes reconciliation with the one-sidednesses of others more of a problem than it should ever have become. The second cause has had distorting effects on both the intellectual, the moral, and the devotional outlook and practice of Christian people. The wild vagaries of an irresponsible Biblical criticism, for example, provoked a reaction which became obscurantist in its endeavour to preserve the heritage of Christian faith from vandalism. The loss of the sense of community responsibility was one prime factor in bringing about the first cleavage and in making understanding difficult to achieve. Similarly in other fields of Christian life, the myth of the isolated individual wrought havoc which it will take long to repair.

Once prejudice has been removed, however, the overcoming of such relative differences is a mere matter of time, study and the creation of understanding.

There is, however, one type of difference where difference is not due to mere prejudice, and where increased understanding does not necessarily bring agreement with it. That is the great Catholic-Protestant controversy. This controversy is based on one fundamental divergence. While both sides are agreed as to the *fact* of God's Revelation in Christ and the Church's *responsibility* to *witness* to that fact, they are at variance as to the *mode* in which God has entrusted His Gospel to the Church and is present in her. (For further study of this point, cf. "The Great Misunderstanding", in *The Student World*, second quarter, 1937).

Three points are especially important for a right

estimate of this controversy. First : the two sides are united by the fact of God's Revelation in Christ and their faith in that fact ; "an unbeliever cannot be a heretic". Secondly : the controversy is rationally insoluble. Compromise is no solution. A choice must be made. Thirdly : the way to a healing of the breach must be sought along the way of a deeper understanding of the meaning of the forgiving love of God, by which He has reconciled us all to Himself and calls us to be reconciled with one another (cf. II Cor. v, 19 and I John iv, 10-11). Neither tolerance nor fanaticism can bring us peace ; only the difficult and painful process of forgiveness can do so — for it is close to the Cross, and so to the reconciliation which is the gift of God.

### The Notes of the Church

We may now return to the true heritage which was described at the beginning on a Biblical basis, in order to define more clearly its main features and so to see better what we must do in order to be true to it. Our best starting-point here will be the words of the Creed : "I believe One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church".

The Church is *One* community, as the God who brought her into being is one, and as her Lord, who is the Head of which she is the Body, is one. The local church is not a separate entity, but an integral part of a single community which spans all time and space, and which holds the one faith.

The Church is a *Holy* community. That means primarily, not a morally perfect community, but a community separated out by the call and choice of God for His service in the world.

She is a community constituted not by the will or

choice of man but by the Divine call ; and so the keynote of her life and witness is always the sovereignty of the almighty holy love of God. The worship of the Church is one vital part of her service ; so is her ministry of love in the field of human society. At every point, her service has this transcendent reference to the sovereignty of God at its heart.

From a moral point of view, the holiness of the Church has very definite implications.

It ought to be made a good deal clearer than it has been recently that the Church is a community of saved sinners rather than a club of the morally respectable, and that she has definite functions as a moral hospital. Entry into the Church and continuance in her involve a definite turning away from sin to faith in God ; but the decisions of individual members should not have either to be made or to be kept in isolation. The community surrounds and supports the individual members, and if it has new sanctions, it also has new safeguards and new helps against sin. The Church has sometimes allied herself too closely with bourgeois respectability, and is consequently sharing its present discredit. She now has the task of showing that she can face all that is in man and show the way to the overcoming of the desperate needs which respectability would not face. Her members are "called saints" by the will of God, not by reason of their moral spotlessness ; they are "called to be saints" by becoming perfect and holy as He is who calls them.

The Church is a *Catholic* community — or, as we said earlier, an *oecumenical* community. This conception has an outward and an inward side. On the outward side, it implies the universality of the Church, in life and worship. On the inward side, it implies the wholeness of life which can come only to those

who hold the whole faith and live in a community which transcends the communities of their lesser loyalties. It is difficult for many of us even to grasp the idea of such wholeness, because of our divisions. But once we have seen it, its full restoration becomes one of the main calls upon our devotion, since it is so clearly one of the unique notes of the Christian Church.

The Church is an *Apostolic* community. That means, first, that her life is continuous with that of the Apostolic Church, and secondly, that she is a community sent out into the world with a Divine commission to evangelize it (Matt. xxviii, 18-20).

First, then, her life is continuous with that of the Apostolic Church. Different confessions have different conceptions of how that continuity has been, and is best to be, safeguarded. The Catholic view lays especial stress on continuity of *orders* here, through an Apostolic succession of bishops. The Protestant view emphasizes continuity of *faith* and purity of witness. The problem is too complex for full analysis here. There are many books which deal with it. Here we need note only that the *fact* of Apostolicity is universally agreed to be one essential note of the Church, though the *mode* of its securing is differently interpreted.

Secondly, she is a community *sent out* into the world with a Divine commission to evangelize it. Evangelism is certainly at the very heart of the Church's true life. And the field is as wide as the world itself.

The message itself has been dealt with in the preceding section. Here we have to consider the Church as an instrument of evangelization. And there are certain things which leap to the eye when we do so.

First, the Church cannot overtake her responsibilities by simply holding Church Services. These are indeed essential, both as means of grace and as ways of witness ; the church building is a spiritual powerhouse. But the spiritual power requires to be distributed ; and here (just as in the economic realm !) there is a hitch.

What is wrong is simply that the Church in the West has been established too long in a position of security (cf. also Section I, Paragraph on the Church). Fortunately for her, she is now rapidly being brought again into that missionary attitude which really belongs to her. And the most urgent thing is that she should be ready in advance, so as not to be thrown into confusion by any disruption or dislocation of the world in which she lives or of her own position in it.

Secondly, the Christian laity is at the moment insufficiently aware of its responsibility and equipped for carrying it out. It requires to be made articulate and to be mobilized. This is where the project of forming Christian cells, to be discussed more fully at the end of this Outline, appears in its full significance.

There are those who prophesy the speedy end of the organized Churches. Without going so far as that, we may say that we must be prepared for very drastic alterations in the situation of the Church, and that the very possibility of bearing an effective witness may depend upon the working out of a new attitude to and technique of evangelism, which shall be commensurate with the demand of our time and more nearly in accord with the will of God for His chosen community.

This will include a complete revision of the former conception of missionary work. The Younger Churches of the East are coming into their own. Their older sisters of the West must be ready to bear



witness to the unique character of Christian Community by letting the younger members of the family grow up without attempting to dominate or exploit them, saying : "They must increase, but we must decrease." Self-government, self-support and self-propagation must be the aims of all the Churches. But each of them must be ever ready to place her best forces at the disposal of the others when needed.

### Conclusion

The calling of the Church is to show the world by the witness of her faith and order, life and work, the one sufficient basis for true community life — the forgiving love of God. The world to which she has to witness is divided into rival camps of ideologies, the adherents of each of which deny the name of brother to those of the others. The Church must witness to the fact that Christian Community can surmount ideological barriers ; that Christians can call one another brothers in the faith even while they still differ from them ; and that the Christian Community of forgiving love is the one place where otherwise intolerable tensions and irreducible antagonisms can be borne, through faith in Him in whom God has given us the reconciliation.

If we really believe in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, it is our calling to put this into practice.

Suggested Questions  
for use in Discussion Groups in National Areas

1. To what extent did the Church, in the larger meaning of the word, begin to take form in the days of the Old Testament ?
2. What significance does the training of the twelve have for those who are thinking in terms of social action for our day ?
3. Do we as Christians have the right to expect to participate effectively in the remedial work which needs to be done in the larger community, without recognizing the place and work of the Holy Spirit as described in the Book of Acts ?
4. Does the existence of separated Christian confessions prejudice the Christian cause ? Give reasons for your answer.
5. Follow up the relations between the humanistic culture springing from the Renaissance and the Protestant Churches springing from the Reformation. Has there been an unholy alliance ? What *positive* signs are there in Protestantism of a break-away from it ?
6. If you are a Protestant, can you see the reasonableness of the Catholic position on its own premises ? If you are a Catholic, can you see the reasonableness of the Protestant position on its own premises ? If not, work till you can.
7. What do the Creeds mean when they ask us to say : *I believe in the Church* ?
8. In the light of the Apostolic conception of the Church, what is its missionary responsibility in our day — in the immediate community in which it exists ? In the national community ? In the world community ?
9. How does forgiveness differ from tolerance ? Is there any other adequate basis for a sound community life than forgiving love ?



### SECTION III

## THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND THE SECULAR SOVEREIGNTIES

### A. The Secular Sovereignities of Today

The world today is obviously full of divided and divisive loyalties to different powers which in their own way lay claim to sovereignty over human life.

The problems created by this situation cannot be solved simply by denying to these powers any claim upon men's loyalty at all. For each of them has its own due place in the structure of life. And the trouble arises, not from the mere existence of these powers, but from the claim to *absolute* sovereignty which each of them tends to make when man has ceased to acknowledge any *transcendent* sovereignty which could give all other powers their relative authority each within its own sphere.

The Introduction has shown how man's withdrawal of his allegiance from the transcendent sovereignty of God brought about, first an individualist autonomy, and then — after that had had time to show its bankruptcy : man's utter inability to find true life by being his own master — a collectivist autonomy : an attempt to find "the way to life" (the title of a Communist propaganda-film !) by the transference of sovereignty to mass movements which have a programme for human life and deny allegiance to any authority other than their own.

It has been well said that *totalitarianism* — the claim to absolute sovereignty of which we have been speaking — is the answer to the *futilitarianism* — the sense of life's meaninglessness — which has been the prevalent mood of the last generation. A rootless humanity *needs* to subject itself to the authority of some sovereign power. The secular mass-movements of today *claim* the right to exercise such authority. The absence of any *acknowledged* transcendent sovereignty means that both the need and the claim are aggravated to a degree quite out of proportion to the real situation of man in the world. Hence arise not only the devastating successes of these mass-movements, but also the mystical neo-paganisms and pseudo-religions which accompany them.

The problem is not confined, however, within the limits of the more outspoken and blatantly demonstrative movements of today. The influence of the general trend indicated above extends to all parts of the world, and adopts subtler and less easily detectable forms among those who would repudiate the more extreme movements. It will be part of our task to discover and unmask these disguised forms in the part of the world where we live.

Now let us set down some of the most prevalent and typical "secular sovereignties" of our time.

First of all, there is one which eludes compact definition, although its influence is all-pervasive in the realm of personal life. That is *vitalism* — the exaltation and worship of life. It is important that we should not allow our attention to be devoted exclusively to the political and economic "sovereignties", but should also consider those which are most deeply affecting the moral life of the people. When we do so, it at once becomes clear that this exaltation of intensity of life is claiming the devotion

of millions today. Writers such as D. H. Lawrence blazed a trail which countless writers for the circulating libraries have followed ; and if Lawrence was the prophet of the movement, the cinemas have been its temples and the film stars its priests and priestesses. The exaggerated devotion shown to such people is a very serious symptom. There are others more disquieting still, such, for instance, as the influence of modern dance forms, music and lyrics on the general moral tone of youth. All that need be said here is that not only Mars but also Venus is in the ascendent today, and that this form of neo-paganism is certainly the most popular.

Secondly, there are the various forms of *nationalism*, which may be bound up with an exaltation of a given race (e.g. the Aryan) or State (e.g. the *Imperium Romanum*) or national consciousness (e.g. the British). Each of these forms displays its own special characteristics, which require special study if it is to be properly understood. But all of them are based upon the assumption or assertion (it should be noted that the fact it is not talked about in a given case does not necessarily mean that it is not there : it may be simply taken for granted) that the nation in question has the right to have the whole life of its members at its own exclusive disposal, and that it itself has a unique and semi-divine status in its own right, because of its racial qualities or its political tradition or a mixture of these with other qualities for which the nation, Narcissus-like, can admire itself.

There are certain cases in which the State has embodied these convictions in the very structure of its institutions, and imposed them thereby upon its citizens for their acquiescent or enthusiastic reception. It is of these cases that we usually think in the West ; and it is these cases that confront us with the special

question of the status, functions and limitations of the State. It is these cases also which have evolved the most highly developed forms of neo-paganism, together with the educational technique for impressing these beliefs and attitudes of mind and will upon their Youth. This raises the special question of the philosophy of education.

There are other cases, however, no less significant for the future, in which an intense feeling of nationalism has grown up in opposition to the State and its institutions. This is especially true of nations under alien sovereignty (cf. the history of Irish or Indian nationalism), and this brings up the special question of the status, functions and limitations of imperialistic sovereignty.

Thirdly, there are the various *racial ideologies*, which, while closely connected in many cases with nationalistic views, have given rise to a set of "race problems" which requires special study. Here as in all the other cases, the real difficulty lies not in the fact of racial differences — not even in the fact of inter-racial tensions and conflicts (for such must arise in all the common life of man) — but in the claim to absolute *sovereignty* and supremacy raised by some races in virtue of certain qualities and achievements which they assert to be peculiarly their own. This at once produces bitterness, antagonism, and cleavage between them and the other "subject" races, who are conscious that they have also their own special gifts and powers for the enrichment of our human heritage. A solution to the problem, and a healing of the wounds it causes, can be found only on condition that the "sovereign" races recognize that theirs is only a relative and temporary authority and stewardship, and so abrogate their absolute claims, and on condition that the "subject" races accept

their time of education as an opportunity for creative advancement and enhancement of their powers which may multiply tenfold the value of their future contribution to the family life of mankind.

Fourthly, there are the various forms of *economic sovereignty*, or plutocracy. The form of this which we most readily associate with the term "plutocracy" is the *capitalism* so widely aspersed today, with its accompanying soulless exploitation of the worker and unblushing enthronement of profit-making as a worthy and sufficient aim of industrial or commercial life. But the term "plutocracy" is no less applicable to reactionary *communism*, with its insistence on the determination of the course of history by a completely materialistic economic process, and with its economic eschatology — the vision of the future exploitation, by those at present exploited, of the material wealth of the world. The transference of ownership does not change the attitude of mind to the things (and people) owned. In both cases, the god of economics is enthroned and served — often with selfless devotion ; the only difference is that the second form aims at an organization of collective happiness whereby the many, instead of only the few, will be able to live comfortably by bread alone.

Fifthly, we have a number of cosmopolitan or *international ideologies*. The quasi-religious cosmopolitan brotherhoods of Rotarianism and Free Masonry should be noticed here, since their influence is by no means negligible. The most important international ideology, however, is undoubtedly that which sees the solution of the world's problems in an enthronement of the League of Nations as a kind of super-State, with an absolute sovereignty over all the various relative national sovereignties, and with an all-powerful International Police Force for enforcing obedience

to its decrees. The most fundamental criticism of this ideology (however valuable many of its contentions may be) is similar to that just made of the communist reaction : namely, that a merely immanent transference of sovereignty does not make any essential difference to the attitude of mind of those who rule or are ruled ; and the enthronement of an international body as supremely sovereign falls under the same condemnation as that of a national body. So long as there is no transcendent sovereignty, no transcendent loyalty and obedience, the efforts of man to control himself and his affairs will remain abortive (cf. Section V on *The World of Nations*).

## **B. The Biblical Answer to the Question of Sovereignty**

No Christian answer to the questions of the status of the Christian Community itself, and the relative importance of the loyalties of the Christian Community and the Christian individual, can be made except on a Biblical basis.

The Bible affords ample material for giving an answer to these questions.

(1) The whole Old Testament may be regarded simply as the story of the trials men had to undergo so as to bring them to accept the God-given answer to these questions of sovereignty. The books of the Law, the books of the Prophets, and the books of Psalms and other writings, all give the same answer in different settings.

In the books of the Law, we have such outstanding answers as (a) the acknowledgment of the Divine Sovereignty in the faith and obedience of Abraham (cf. Gen. xii and xxii) ; (b) the tremendous insistence



of the Ten Commandments upon the Sovereignty of God (Exod. xx).

The books of the Prophets are really nothing but the record of the proclamation of the omnipotence and absolute sovereignty of God in face of economic (cf. Amos) and political (cf. Isaiah) attempts to order human life apart from God.

The Psalms proclaim in varying terms, fitted to meet the differing moods and needs of human individuals, nothing but the message that, despite all the evil and sin and suffering in the world, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. And the Book of Job is perhaps the sublimest expression of the triumph of that faith that has ever been written.

(2) The New Testament on the whole takes the Old Testament answer as given, and goes on from there to begin to demonstrate the kind of community and individual life that becomes possible once the right answer has been given to all the conflicting powers which claim sovereignty over man. But several things both illustrate the conflict and indicate the attitude of mind and will needed for giving the right answer : for example, (a) Jesus' answers to would-be disciples : "Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead" (Mt. viii. 22) ; the whole passage Luke xiv. 25-33, especially — "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" ; Mark viii. 34-38 : "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me... For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?... " (b) Jesus' solution of the tribute-money question : Mark xii. 13-17 — "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's..." (c) Statements of a positive attitude towards the secular authorities : Romans xiii : "Let every soul be subject

unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God : the powers that be are ordained by God...

(d) Statements of a negative attitude towards the authorities : Acts v. 12 ff. : "We ought to obey God rather than men."

### C. The Christian Community and the Secular Sovereignities

The Biblical answers transport us into a quite different world of thought from that of Section A. But it is not a less realistic but a more realistic world of thought ; because it is taking account of the greatest and most fundamental reality in the world : the Sovereignty of God. We Christians too often discuss that Sovereignty as if it were a difficult and delicate problem. Our real calling is to proclaim it uncompromisingly as the most important fact in the world (especially when coupled with the further message that it is the Sovereignty of Love) — as the thing which it is overwhelmingly and urgently necessary that men should realize and recognize and obey ; since *nothing* at all that does not acknowledge it in sincerity and truth can last. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it ; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waiteth but in vain" (Psalm cxxvii. 1-2). The sovereignty of God is not a problem but a fact, which (like all facts) exists whether we like it or not, and which (unlike all other facts) determines the issue of every human undertaking and every human life.

The message of the Sovereignty of God is needed today even more urgently than that of the Love of God. What is that love if it can be flouted with impunity ? We must begin by putting the fear of God into men.

It is only when they fear Him that they can begin to understand the unutterable wonder of His love. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." "Our God is a consuming fire."

It is only *after* we have taken account of this fact that we can begin to make any fruitful study from a Christian point of view of the secular sovereignties. We do not study their claims first and then fit God's claim into the gaps ; we acknowledge God's claim first and then see where they come in. That is the underlying meaning of Jesus' difficult words about discipleship already quoted ; and that is the only attitude worthy of Him, the only possible attitude for His followers.

Once that has been made clear, we can begin to answer the questions stated at the beginning of B :

(a) What is the status of the Christian Community itself ? — As the community instituted by God for the purpose of representing before men the fact of His Sovereignty of Love it is the most awe-inspiring and thrilling Community on earth. It has both the right and the duty to stand like a rock and set its face like flint against all usurpation by secular powers which make the demonic claim to absolute sovereignty. It alone can adequately judge the relative importance of conflicting claims on men's loyalty ; for it alone has the mind of Christ.

(b) What is the relative importance of the conflicting loyalties of (i) the Christian Community and (ii) the Christian individual ?

(i) A radical and all-important distinction has to be drawn here between the Christian Community and the Christian individual. The Community as a whole exists to show forth *to all men* the sovereignty of God's Love ; and as He loves all men even in their

sins, and as the Church cannot usurp the final judgment of God but must let the wheat and the tares grow together till the harvest, it must extend its welcome to all who profess to love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, even if they profess the most varied political and economic and social loyalties, and must offer to all alike the Forgiveness of God, since all men alike need that above all else. The Christian Community dare not say that a pacifist (to take only one example out of many) has by his pacifism made himself worthier to obtain God's Mercy than his brother Christian who sincerely believes that his relative loyalty to his nation is not wiped out or to be ignored, and still requires obedience, though it bring him pain. And so in other dilemmas and difficult choices : the Church must stand above all choices except the one fundamental one — the choice for or against the Sovereignty of God.

(ii) The case is very different with Christian individuals — or groups of individual Christians. These, having accepted the Sovereignty of God, may well be called by Him to bear special witness in difficult and costly ways to that Sovereignty, against the tide of world opinion and even of current Christian opinion until the truth prevails, and the wider body of weaker brethren are also led by the Spirit into acceptance of the truth for which the witnessing minority stands. And in any case, it is always the duty of each individual Christian to make his own definite choice among the various political and economic possibilities, after a prayerful and careful study of the issues involved.

The making of the above distinction clears away many a conflict and misunderstanding, and leaves both Church and individual Christian all scope for their distinctive functions.

Now we may turn to examine each of the types of

secular sovereignty mentioned in A, and to see their relative truth, and to find our vocation concerning them.

It is already abundantly clear that these can be acknowledged at all only in so far as they abate their false claim to supremacy. That having been said, we may say that *vitalism* represents the natural upsurge of life, and is good and bad like life itself — in dire need of the Forgiveness of God, and especially in need of taking account of *quality* as well as *intensity* of life, and of seeing *temporal* life in the light of *eternal* life. *Nationalism* represents the desire of all nations to make their personal and individual contributions to the life of mankind. *Racialism* represents a similar desire on the part of all races. *Communism* represents a burning desire that a closer approximation to economic justice should be reached. *Internationalism* represents the desire for a more living expression of human brotherhood and community.

Each in its relative sphere, these concerns may play a positive, creative and constructive part in human life. But they can do so only as they are checked and restrained by an unwavering witness to and overruling subjection to the Sovereignty of God. That gives the Christian Community its special and all-important task to do.

It is not easy to indicate more specifically the line of study and action to be followed by Christians in relation to *vitalism*. This is almost uncharted territory from the Christian point of view. It is high time that it was surveyed, by e. g. an analysis of the effects on popular thought and conduct of sensational journalism, the cinema, dance forms, music and lyrics, novelreading, the latest experiments in symbolic art, and so on, and a statement of a more than merely negative Christian position in the matter. The

wide recrudescence of interest in and study of astrology is a cognate subject which demands attention from a Christian point of view. The most far-sighted Christian policy will be to train members of the Christian Community to see their vocation in the fields of journalism, radio and cinema direction, music, art and literature, and to exercise an influence on standards from within those fields. This is one of the most urgent calls to Christian Youth today.

It is much easier to indicate lines of study and action in relation to *nationalism*; for the "Life and Work" Movement has been concentrating on it. It is more difficult to indicate any one specific line; for the research already done has covered an immense field. Guidance will be found in Eric Fenn's book on the Oxford Conference, *That They Go Forward* (cf. bibliography).

The *race question* already has a large literature devoted to it. Its study in different areas will be most realistic if undertaken with reference to the local point of greatest difficulty.

Lines of study and action in relation to the *economic sphere* are indicated in Section IV of this Outline. All we need point out here is that the Christian Community may serve as a counteracting force against excesses both on the Right and on the Left.

As for the *international sphere*, which also has a special Section (V) devoted to it, we need say only that there is great need both for a wider and more positive understanding of the possibilities of development in this sphere, and also for a realistic refusal to entertain utopian expectations, and a sober acceptance of the proper limitations of the international approach to the solution to our problems.

### Suggested Questions

for use in Discussion Groups in National Areas

1. To what extent would the Youth of my nation accept the general analysis of the causes of totalitarianism given here ?
2. Would they agree that vitalism is the most universal neo-paganism of today ? What are its most prevalent forms in my community ? In my country ? Which forms of it are least harmful and which most pernicious ?
3. Which form of nationalism has gripped the Youth of my country most powerfully ? What are its values and its dangers ?
4. What are the most evident forms of class-consciousness in my community ? In my nation ? Can they be justified at all (after deducting the influence of prejudice, snobbery, inferiority-complexes) ? At what point do communism and Christianity become incompatible ? Where is the "communism" of the Early Church (Acts iv. 32 — v. 14) radically different from modern communism or even socialism ?
5. To what extent is international order to be achieved by an extension of the authority of the League of Nations ? What are the limits to what can be done in this way — quite apart from the recalcitrance of national powers ?
6. What constructive help does the Biblical answer to this question give us in considering Section C and the questions relating to it ?
7. Am I prepared to accept the statement concerning the status of the Christian Community given in the text ? Does the fundamental distinction drawn between the position of the Christian Church as a whole, and the position of individual Christians or groups of Christians, in relation to conflicts of loyalty appear to be sound ? What is my responsibility as a Christian as a creative contributor to the thought and life of the whole Christian Community ?
8. What if any are the positive values of the five "secular sovereignties" given in the text ?
9. What are the most effective lines of special service which may be taken up by Christian Youth in my community and nation in relation to the five fields of human life in which "secular sovereignties" have been indicated ?

## SECTION IV

### THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND THE SOCIAL ORDER

The Social-Economic Order which confronts us as we try to look objectively at the present-day world must be recognized as the product of the process of emancipation which began in the Renaissance. It is the product of the movement inspired by the desire to free the individual from the social, economic, and cultural restrictions of the feudal order of the Middle Ages.

In spite of the problems which confront us today, and in spite of the enormous price paid in the lives of children, youth and women for this economic freedom in the last two centuries, we cannot but recognize this acknowledgment of the right of "free enterprise" — of the right of the development of individual human personality — as one of the great forward steps in human history. It expressed itself first in the intellectual realm, but it soon found expression also in the political and economic fields. Applied to industry and agriculture it enabled man for the first time in history to overcome the problem of scarcity. In spite of large increases in population it has become technologically possible in these recent years to meet the material needs of man on an improved standard of living which for vast areas includes not only the necessities but the comforts of life. The mechanization of industry and commerce has not only



taken much of the drudgery from labour and destroyed the fear of famine, but also given the worker a leisure which in the past has been enjoyed only by the favoured few.

It was believed by the fathers of the Renaissance that freedom would make for equality, and in these later years it has been hoped that the coming of plenty would mean the establishment of social justice. It was felt that acquisition of the right of self-expression would inspire man to seek his own enrichment of life in a harmony of social life. But the experiences of these recent decades have shown that such assumptions were based on premises which ignored some of the most basic facts of human life. The forces which brought about material progress and should have made for equality, unity and security have all too frequently produced inequality, disunity and insecurity. Large-scale production destroyed the craftsmanship and many of the finer values of the traditional guilds and resulted in inequalities as blatant and inhuman as those of the preceding age. Instead of inspiring a universal culture, the new freedom, cut loose from the unifying principle which had given direction to Western civilization for centuries, prepared the way for a variety of independent cultural and national expressions. Machine methods of manufacture have made industrial countries entirely dependent upon industrial activity and the exchange of goods, and, consequently, the whole of society suffers from the periodic fluctuations of industry. For great numbers of people the coming of modern industry meant the giving up of a limited security for a greater insecurity. We thus have the contradictory picture of poverty in the midst of plenty.

Even more serious is the loss of the more subjective values. The efforts of human beings have tended more

and more to become merely a commodity to be bought and sold, and even the more skilled worker finds it difficult, if not impossible, to retain or acquire a sense of vocation.

Such, in brief, is the situation which developed in the more advanced industrial nations within the framework of what has come to be known as capitalism. In the nineteenth century this development called forth the trade unions which helped to mitigate some of the more evident evils of the system. A later consequence of the system was the rise of socialism, a tendency or movement whose influence goes far beyond the bounds of the socialist or social democrat party, and which in these more recent years has expressed itself in the totalitarian systems of communism and fascism.

### Danger Points in the Existing Economic Order

It must be understood that whatever is said under such a caption cannot have equal validity for all parts of the world. It must also be remembered that bold experiments designed to overcome the very problems referred to in this section are already under way. Finally it should be pointed out that most of these evils have international as well as national ramifications. What may be a "class" problem when viewed nationally becomes an international problem when seen in its larger world setting. While it will be impossible in a brief outline of this kind to indicate all the vulnerable points in what is still the dominant social order, it will, it is hoped, be helpful to those following this Study to point out those issues which are clearly in conflict with the Christian conception of man and of a moral universe conceived

in terms of the laws of relationship and community revealed by God through the life, death and teachings of His Son.

*The Domination of Human Personality by Irresponsible Economic Power.*

Any study of a problem of this kind should be entered upon with a due appreciation of the potential values which must lie in an economic system which has relieved man of so many crushing burdens and given him the instruments, which, if rightly applied, make possible the abolition of extreme poverty and meet basic human wants. We cannot escape the fact that want continues in the presence of the possibility of plenty because "economic considerations" still outweigh basic human needs. This indifference to the deeper human values creates a temper which is destructive both for those who wield authority and for those who come under its sway. It is the problem of the Christian Youth of today to transfer the innumerable gains of the industrial age into a sociological setting in which the Christian conceptions of personality and community will be increasingly realizable: i. e. a setting in which irresponsible "economic autocracy" will be replaced by a "socially responsible economic authority".

*Inequality of Opportunity.*

The solution of our economic problems demands the cooperative effort of workers, owners of capital and managers, etc. The achievement of a unifying culture requires as free as possible a relationship between men. A necessary condition for attaining

both these ends is a recognition of basic human equality, ensuring that economic and political power is exercised in the interests of the whole community and that the glaring inequalities of social environment and opportunity be removed. Our present social and economic inequalities are "neither good business nor good manners" (See Tawney's *Equality*). It is of course impossible to maintain that all men are equally *endowed* by nature and that there can ever be *perfect* equality either in the distribution or in the enjoyment of the products of civilization. But it is essential to maintain that all men have an equal right to consideration and to equality of opportunity, and that there are clear and definable standards of *equity* which should govern distribution and enjoyment. We must admit, however, that the existing Social Order does not provide anything even approaching equity in the distribution of the products of industry. Its inequalities are such that great areas of populations are deprived of the opportunity either to attain a reasonable development of their power in their existing environment or to improve their situation. This means, for example, that in all too many industrial countries educational opportunities are almost as unequal as is the distribution of the products of industry, because admission to educational institutions is determined far more by the income of parents than by the ability of children.

Any deep probing of the general problem of equality will reveal its international and its interracial implications. We cannot, therefore, justly strive for equality and "rising standards of living" at home without at the same time giving reasonable consideration to the problem of equality of opportunity between nations and races. Peace at home and peace between nations are alike dependent upon achieving

social justice. And we must admit that in all too many areas inequality continues between the sexes. We recognize that the Christian ideal of equality of the sexes is based on the fundamental point of reverence for personality. This does not mean that equality should be interpreted as identity, a concept which would ignore the physical and other differences of men and women. True equality according to the Christian ideal means the fullest measure of equality of opportunity and responsibility which does not do violence or injury to the distinctive physical, intellectual and spiritual qualities with which God has endowed women.

As Christian Youth we approach the problem with a belief in the God of the Christian faith for whom differences between classes and nations and races are external and secondary, and we will pledge ourselves to the task of finding a form of social organization which will not do violence to the common humanity of men or outrage the dignity of one of those created in His image.

#### *The Phantom of Insecurity.*

The sense of insecurity is perhaps the most ravaging fear which is today eating at the hearts of the men and women who have been uprooted by our industrial civilization. If there is a condition which is more depressing it is the "sense of not being needed" which has been saddled upon the Youth of today by a maladjusted economic and international order.

The most evident forms of insecurity which have their roots in the inability to work resulting from sickness, industrial accidents, and the decreasing energy of the declining years, have in these recent years received increasing attention in nearly all

industrial countries. This is due in no small measure to the untiring efforts of the International Labour Office, which approaches the problem from the standpoint of international relations as well as from the standpoint of social justice. Its work acquires a double significance because it is based on the assumption that there can be no sound basis for international relations in a world in which there is grave social inequality between nations. While much progress has been made in this field, much remains to be done ; and Christian Youth will still need to acquaint itself with the complex nature of the problems growing out of these more evident forms of insecurity. But it will want to concern itself even more carefully with the less generally recognized forms of insecurity resulting from unemployment and the delay in the opening up of occupational and professional opportunities for the oncoming generation. These are problems, with the deeper aspects of which few nations have as yet come to grips. No social order can long survive either the moral or the physical ravages of unemployment. Neither can any Order long survive which denies Youth the possibilities for the establishment of a normal family life during those years which nature has designated for the fulfilment of this goal. These are uncharted fields which cry for courageous thinking and action. The more difficult pioneering tasks are still ahead.

Such in barest outline are the major problems of our present-day Social Order. Is there anything in the Christian faith and in the Christian conception of life which has a bearing on these burning problems ? Does Christianity have a concrete word to say to this situation ? Is the world ready to listen to such a word ?

## The Challenge of the Present Situation to Christianity

Only a few years ago the average man felt reasonably sure that the remaining problems of his social life would yield, as had so many others, before the application of the techniques of a scientific age. But in these more recent days, extreme certainty is giving way to questioning and men have begun a feverish search for other values and other norms. Man has again discovered that he lives in a universe in which there are factors and forces which he cannot control, and the discovery has unleashed an appeal which Christianity is ill prepared to meet.

If the forces of Christianity are to work creatively in the present situation they will need to face the reality of a number of basic facts like the following :

1. That there is a way between self-righteous fanaticism on the one hand and complacency toward the existing order on the other. Intelligence is quite as important as courage. Failure to recognize this fact has made shipwreck of many worthy enterprises and efforts.

2. That there must be an understanding of the "means and the tempo" of reconstruction. Shall we go the longer democratic route or must our action be drastic ? Are we certain, for example, that the replacement of economic power by political power will bring relief ? Or are we called upon to make a more fundamental attack on the problem ? How are we to avoid the re-appearance of old evils in new forms ?

3. That the Christian Community is a fellowship which transcends differences of judgment on concrete economic situations. Unless we can increasingly realize this fact in our own fellowship through

repentance, we cannot expect to exert a healing influence in areas of conflict in the larger economic or political realms.

4. That the heart of the problem is the unmasking of the illusions of all groups, whether they be capitalist, agrarian, middle class, or workers. Each must be made to see that its own claims are coloured by self-interests and that the interests of the whole community cannot be made identical with the interests of any one group. Self-knowledge is more important than knowledge of the sins of others. The acknowledgment of this fact marks the beginning of the process of sound social reconstruction. Until individuals and groups are willing to subject themselves to this kind of self-examination, the road to justice in social and international relations will remain barred. Such self-examination seldom comes without the help of the spirit of forgiveness and repentance which is at the heart of vital Christianity.

### The distinctive Contribution of the Christian

It is beyond the scope of this study to analyze or even to enumerate all the factors which are essential to the complex task of establishing a more perfect Social Order. Forms of production, and methods of distribution, exchange and cooperation, constitute the institutional and organizational framework within which the Social Order must express itself. The sincere Christian recognizes this fact, and will devote himself unsparingly to finding the best possible structure for the ordering of human life. But his responsibility does not stop there. He has distinct values to bring to the task ; and it must be the purpose



of a study such as this to make these *plus values* stand out with all possible clarity.

*The Christian Conception of the Nature of Man.*

One of the most important facts to be kept in mind in all efforts at social reconstruction is that man, left to his own resources, expresses himself in the same manner in whatever organizational arrangement he may be placed. In other words, the acquisitiveness and self-interest of man has never yet been overcome by environmental or organizational change. It is nevertheless true to affirm that many of the generous impulses and desires of men necessitate social reorganization for their expression. Men possessed of these qualities must of necessity address themselves to this social task if they are to find scope for the exercise of these qualities. As the Christian faith clearly sees, the actions and relationships of all men are conditioned by the sin of selfishness. Individually and collectively men need the redeeming power of God in their lives. God the Creator has through Christ revealed Himself also as Redeemer and through His ever-present Spirit He is ready to recreate those who come to Him in repentance, either as individuals or as communities. This is the fact to which the Christian must bear unceasing witness through word and life as he throws himself into the struggle.

Man is after all the determining factor in every problem of relationship, whether it involves nations, groups or merely individuals. Any serious study involving social relations must therefore be prefaced by an adequate inquiry into the nature of man. It is at this point that the Christian who has learned the secret of victorious living should be able to make one of his unique contributions.

*The Christian Conception of Personality.*

There is no escaping the fact that in the life of every individual there is a never-ending tension between the demands for personal expression and the demands of the institutional life of the social, economic and political order in which he finds himself. The maintenance of a proper balance between these two factors is one of the major problems of all social planning ; and the discovery of personal fulfilment in social discipline and service must be a ruling passion. Without the proper integration of the individual in the common task there is social chaos ; without reasonable freedom of individual expression growth ceases and civilization stagnates.

Christianity holds that God calls man into a personal relationship of love and obedience with Himself which re-expresses itself in his service to his fellow men. Christianity recognizes man's relationship to and responsibility toward the "Natural Order", but it is opposed to any order or system, whether it be political, social, or economic, which demands a "totalitarian" surrender of human personality to it. Christianity is in conflict, not with any particular social or political system as such, but with that tendency in every system which seeks to impose a totally impersonal, secularized conception of life on the entire community. Such a tendency left unchallenged must inevitably lead to a modern paganism more cruel and destructive to the finer human values than the paganism of another day.

*The Christian Conception of Community.*

The Christian faith contends that the human personality finds its fullest realization in a community

of persons united through a common fellowship with God the Father who bids men to serve Him by ministering to the needs of their fellow-men. There is no escaping the fact that love of God and love of neighbour are inseparable.

It is in this area and in the realm of the family that the struggle for the new Social Order must begin. Unwieldy and unnatural social groupings will never be transformed into true communities even by the most sweeping decrees. Until the agglomerations of humanity which are the products of an opportunistic and soulless industrial and economic system can be reduced to compassable units in which the laws of "community" can again become operative, our great centres of population will destroy our civilization more rapidly than the normally functioning units of society can produce it.

Our Social Order cannot be any more perfect than the communal units which compose it. If it could rediscover the social significance of its spiritual heritage and recognize the strategical advantages which it commands, the Universal Christian Community could release a power in the world, through the serious acceptance of the Christian conception of community for the communal life of its world-encircling membership, which would effectively challenge the self-seeking influences which at present determine our Social Order.

Our real needs are for a Christian understanding of Man, a knowledge of social history such as shows the *next possible* stages in social development, a critical survey of those possibilities so as to discover how so to act in regard to them as to embody as much as possible of our conception of Man ; and a dependence on God for the power to see and do any of these things.

Suggested Questions  
for use in Discussion Groups in National Areas

1. What are the most evident injustices of the Social Order which have developed in my country ? How is one to account for their appearance ?
  2. What efforts have been made in recent years toward amelioration ? Toward the correction of the more basic faults ?
  3. What are the theories of social betterment or reconstruction which are receiving the most serious consideration in my country today ? Which of them most nearly approach the conceptions of "relationship" and "community" revealed through the life and death of Christ and set forth in the Gospels ?
  4. To what extent are the Church and the other Christian organizations of which I am a member giving a convincing demonstration of the richness of life in a living Christian Community ? What would happen in the larger community in which I live my life if each of the Churches and Christian organizations which serve it would sincerely strive to realize the standards of the Christian Community in their own circles ? Would it be possible to inspire my Church or the Christian organization of which I am a member to undertake the realization of the communal life which we visualize when we think in terms of the Christian Community as defined in the Gospels ?
  5. What is my personal responsibility as a Christian toward the social, economic and political institutions to which I am related ? To what extent am I as a Christian responsible for the transformation of the institutional life into which my everyday responsibility takes me ? What are the next practical steps which I and the Christian Youth who are associated with me should take in the light of the discussion of this Outline ?
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## SECTION V

### THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN THE WORLD OF NATIONS

It would be difficult to imagine a more critical international situation than the one which confronts us as we enter upon this study of the problems standing in the way of the establishment of a more equitable international order. International agreements entered into with the most solemn pledges have been ignored, and ancient frontiers have been ruthlessly violated without a declaration of war. International war is being waged on the territory of other nations, and piracy has returned to the high seas. A resurgent nationalism born out of the World War is assuming unexpected forms of selfish isolation and national arrogance. Economic barriers have dried up long-established streams of trade and commerce, and nation after nation is entering upon a suicidal struggle for an uneconomic self-sufficiency. The faith in the possibility of realizing an international order based on law, justice, and cooperation which was so prevalent only a decade ago has been replaced by disillusionment, bewilderment and dejection. States again demand the right to judge their own cause, and nations again conduct their international negotiations on the basis of power-politics. Nations, which a few short years ago were engaged in a serious study of a formula for progressive disarmament, are

today engaged in a mad race for superiority in armaments. In short, the shallowness of our civilization has been revealed and the thin veneer of our international morality has given away under the first real test. Law and force have not yet been brought into an effective working relationship. International law and the technical and moral problems of international relations have not yet entered into the consciousness of the men and the women who in the last analysis determine the policies of the States which constitute the family of nations.

Such, in briefest outline, is the sombre picture which meets the eyes of Youth as it faces the international situation of today. For many it spells utter despair. But for Christian Youth it should constitute a call to repentance and a challenge to more creative living and action. With penitence we must accept a due share of responsibility for the present state of our international life. Greater concern for the coming of the Universal Christian Community might have reduced many barriers and removed many of the injustices of our international life. But, in the words of the Oxford Conference, "we accept with thanksgiving the valuable instruments which the Church of Christ has given us". "Knowing man and what is in man and knowing Christ and what is in Christ", the Christian Youth of the world will find the way into the very heart of the problem of human relations if it will pay the price in spiritual and intellectual discipline.

### Law and Order — Peaceful Change

The two expressions which one hears perhaps most frequently in discussions of the present-day international situation are "law and order" and "peaceful

change". Unfortunately these concepts, which must be recognized as inseparable and complementary before a sound and just international order can emerge, are as yet seldom linked in the utterances of responsible statesmen, even in these days of extreme crisis. The world is still confronted with the problem of blending two separate but inextricably bound-up processes, namely, "the observance and the enforcement of the law *and* the constant and steady development of the law to conform to changing social needs".

① Without the recognition of the sanctity of law based on a respect for the rights of others, there can be no sound relations either between individuals or between nations. The quality of any civilization must in the end be measured by the degree to which mutually helpful relations have evolved. One can therefore understand the world-wide response to the appeal of the President of the United States of America when he said: "It is true, the moral consciousness of the world must recognize the importance of removing injustices and well-founded grievances, but at the same time it must be aroused to the cardinal necessity of honouring the sanctity of treaties, respecting the rights and liberties of others and putting an end to acts of international aggression".

Unfortunately that part of his appeal having to do with the need for "removing injustices and well-founded grievances" has been almost entirely ignored by the press of the nations which must face these facts before all the nations of the world can enter unitedly upon the difficult task of laying the foundations for a peace based on justice. Even now, men in high places are not willing to face the fact that appeals for the maintenance of law and order which have the appearance of being motivated by a desire to maintain

a questionable *status quo* will prove increasingly ineffective. The present distribution of the world's resources cannot be considered final. Neither can the existing order be looked upon as static. The rulers of nations must reckon with a growing and changing world. Change can be brought about only by considered voluntary action or by the use of force. If these facts are to be given reality, they must find expression in Government action ; and that will require statesmen with a new vision of the deeper aspects of international relations. And we cannot expect effective Governmental action until there is an informed public opinion.

The creation of this larger vision must be considered one of the major present-day responsibilities of Christian Youth. But this task dare not be viewed lightly. It will demand the acquiring of information on world affairs more adequate and reliable than that possessed by the average politician. It will necessitate the discovery of the fact that peaceful change is something far more complicated than the transfer of colonies ; that peaceful change involves an intimate understanding of some of the most complicated problems of human life. It involves material questions like raw materials, monetary standards, balance of trade, and trade barriers. But it also involves human factors like population pressure, standards of living, the migration of peoples and national honour. One hears many voices in these days demanding the removal of inequalities of opportunity and the establishment of a more just international order ; but where is the leadership capable of beginning the search for the living elements of justice ? The answers to this question can be given only by the *Youth* of today, because the solutions of the problems require attitudes and skills which have yet to be acquired. And the



greatest responsibility and most hopeful opportunity lie with *Christian Youth*, because the attainment of the knowledge and the qualities of character required for its realization will demand a discipline beyond the power of man striving with his own might.

### Force as an International Instrument

For Christians who strive seriously to face the problems of the present international situation there is perhaps no issue which presents greater difficulties than that of the use of force. As the findings of the Oxford Conference point out, the search for the Will of God will always be a matter of agonizing perplexity for every sincere Christian whose country is involved in war or is called upon to take an attitude toward a war. In every situation he is forced to face the basic fact that war is "a diabolical outrage against human personality" and a "defiance of the righteousness of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and Him crucified". He is forced at the same time to face the fact "that man is caught in a sinful situation in which to do what appears as relatively best is an absolute duty before God". The whole Conference thus united in condemning war as a symptom of sin, but it had to record divergence of views regarding what it is relatively best for Christians to do when caught in a sinful situation. We quote the very clear statement of the three divergent views, as it provides an admirable basis for further study.

"In practice this divergence of opinion issues in three main positions which are sincerely and conscientiously held by Christians :

"1. Some believe that war, especially in its modern

form, is always sin, being a denial of the nature of God as love, of the redemptive way of the Cross, and of the community of the Holy Spirit; that war is always ultimately destructive in its effects, and ends in futility by corrupting even the noblest purpose for which it is waged; and that the Church will become a creative, regenerative, and reconciling instrument for the healing of the nations only as it renounces war absolutely. They are therefore constrained to refuse to take part in war themselves, to plead among their fellows for a similar repudiation of war in favour of a better way, and to replace military force by methods of active peace-making.

"2. Some would participate only in 'just wars'. Here there are at least two points of view, depending upon the definition of the 'just war':

- (a) Some consider that Christians should participate only in such wars as are justifiable on the basis of international law. They believe that in a sinful world the State has the duty, under God, to use force when law and order are threatened. Wars against transgressors of international agreements and pacts are comparable with police measures and Christians are obliged to participate in them. But if the State requires its citizens to participate in wars which cannot be thus justified, they believe that Christians should refuse, for the State has no right to force its citizens to take part in sinful actions. Many would add that no war should be regarded as 'just' if the government concerned fails to submit the subject of dispute or *casus belli* to arbitration, conciliation, or judgment of an international authority.

(b) Some would regard a 'just war' as one waged to vindicate what they believe to be an essential Christian principle ; to defend the victims of wanton aggression, or to secure freedom for the oppressed. They would urge that it was a Christian duty, where all other means had failed, to take up arms. In so doing they would look to the verdict of conscience as their ultimate sanction. While recognizing the general importance of supporting civil or international order, the maintenance of such order in the present imperfect state of society cannot be a final obligation. The Christian, though he must be willing to accept martyrdom for himself, cannot expose others to it by refusing to fight for them.

"3. Some, while also stressing the Christian obligation to work for peace and mutual understanding among the nations, hold nevertheless that no such effort can end war in this world. Moreover, while recognizing that political authority is frequently administered in a selfish and immoral way, they nevertheless believe that the State is the agent divinely appointed to preserve a nation from the detrimental effects of anarchic and criminal tendencies amongst its members, and to maintain its existence against the aggression of its neighbours. It is therefore a Christian's duty to obey the political authority as far as possible, and to refrain from everything that is apt to weaken it. This means that normally a Christian must take up arms for his country. Only when he is absolutely certain that his country is fighting for a wrong cause (e.g. in case of an unjustifiable war of aggression) has the ordinary citizen a right to refuse military service."

## International Organization

It is difficult to conceive of the realization of a just international order without the aid of some form of continuous international organization, and this brings us into immediate contact with the League of Nations, which, whatever may be our opinions as to its accomplishments, must be recognized as the most notable effort in the direction of international organization of modern times. This is not the place for a detailed study of its successes and failures. Suffice it to say that its successes are far more numerous and important for the whole of our international life and order than is generally known and recognized.

But the developments of these recent years make it necessary to admit frankly that in the larger political sphere the League has not led the way as the peoples of the nations of the world had hoped and expected. And this is not necessarily the fault of the Covenant and the organizational structure of the League. The evolution of this experiment was determined far more by leadership than by constitutional and organizational factors. The overwhelming majority of the fifty nations which subscribed to the Covenant drafted in Paris in 1919 did so in the firm belief that by that act they were bringing into being an organization with sufficient "entity" to enable it to lead the nations of the world into a new era of international collaboration and into a new organizational relationship which would ensure a profound, unbiased and continuous study of those issues on which the larger and more perfect international justice must be built. We cannot pass lightly over the problem of national "sovereignty" which was involved in this experiment, but some of those most intimately related to the formu-

lation of the plan are convinced that under the Covenant and with the support of the public opinion which prevailed in all countries, including those which would have been most affected by such a development, the League could in the early post-War years have acquired a degree of "entity" which would have given it moral leadership without any serious encroachment on the sovereign rights of nations. For the first decade and a half following the World War the nations of the world were ready and anxious for international cooperation of a new type, and many of those best informed believe that concrete and satisfying beginnings might have been made if the Geneva organization had given a more courageous leadership through those in the highest positions of responsibility in the Secretariat and in the Council. Such a leadership, it is felt, would have made the demands of the Covenant as stated in Article 8 the guiding and motivating factor in the discussion of the disarmament question, and Article 19 would long since have been made the basis for the beginning of the study of the possibilities and problems of peaceful change. Because Article 8 was ignored, the rearmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles have been ignored; and because Article 19 was not given effect by the League on the basis of agreement, it is about to be put into effect outside the League on the basis of threat. Because those in whose hands rested the destiny of the Geneva organization failed to realize the "entity" possibilities inherent in the Covenant, the League gradually became merely a convenient bureau instrument as far as political matters were concerned; and an opportunity without precedent in the history of international organization was lost. It must in fairness be added that clever obstructionist tactics and other unscrupulous manipulations of League machinery by forces

beyond its control have also a large share of responsibility for its ineffectiveness in operation.

The story of the implementing of the political implications of the Covenant is the story of a post-War instrument of peace, fashioned in full consciousness of the horrors and ravages of war, left to the mercies of pre-War diplomacy. There will always be those who will contend that the League is not a Government, that it does not have a mind of its own, and that to criticize it is merely to criticize the member States. All who hold this view need to be reminded that by the beginning of this century the life of the nations had become so interlocked that the acceptance of a new type of national and international status and relationship had become essential and quite generally recognized. This fact had been driven home in the minds of the peoples of the world by the sad realities of the World War ; and the conviction was given reasonable if not perfect and final formulation in the Covenant. All will admit that the Covenant came into being under circumstances which were far from ideal, but an honest recognition of the desire and longings which found expression in it, would have made the new armaments race and the recent violation of territorial rights improbable if not impossible. Failure at this point will go down in history as one of the tragedies of modern times ; and the United States of America will always be obliged to shoulder a due share of the blame for having abandoned a solemn Covenant for the formulation of which she was so largely responsible.

This failure of the League in the political sphere has not in any way disproved the idea of international collaboration, and the need for an agency of international cooperation has probably never been more acutely felt than it is today. But the experiences of

these recent years have clearly demonstrated the fact that international organization is not enough. Until the peoples and the leaders of the nations are prepared to acknowledge a World Order which is above our human creations with their selfish motivations, and a justice which is above our national egoisms, our international conferences will continue to be characterized by marchings and countermarchings for advantages of position which leave the difficult but basic problems of equity and justice untouched. Until the world as a whole is spiritually and intellectually prepared to entrust the solution of problems of international justice to properly-constituted courts of equity and justice, rather than to the methods of "power politics", all ideas of real world community will continue to be mere mirages.

In the light of such facts the responsibility of the Christian Community would appear to be twofold. It should, to begin with, assume a wide but clearly-defined responsibility for the preparation of the fields from which adequate political leadership and an effective public opinion can arise. This means something far more than the organization of propaganda. It means unsparing devotion of time and energy to a great cause and intellectual effort of the first order. Secondly, Christian Youth must undertake a ministry of reconciliation in its own right. The establishment of an ordered world community based on justice is a task quite beyond the realm of pure politics. If it is to have meaning and abiding qualities it must have its roots in the realm of the spirit. Christian Youth must, therefore, be prepared to witness by word and act to the nature and the reality of the Universal Christian Community which recognizes no frontiers either of nation or of race.

## The Christian and the World of Nations

The Christian, as a member of the Universal Christian Community, must live his life in the midst of the normal stress and strain of the whole of the world's life. He is called upon to concern himself not only with the problems of his community but with those of civilization in general. But he brings more than ordinary resources to the task. In the international world his thought and action are distinctive :

First, because he sees the world of nations not only from the "international" but also from the "oecumenical" point of view. As the Resolutions of the Oxford Conference point out, the international approach assumes the division of mankind into separate nations as natural if not as final. The oecumenical approach begins with the assumption that there is an inherent unity in the Universal Christian Community which transcends all frontiers of State and Race. In the words of the Oxford Conference : "The Church brings to the task of achieving a better international order an insight that is not to be derived from ordinary political sources. To those who are struggling to realize human brotherhood in a world where disruptive nationalism makes such brotherhood seem unreal, the Church offers not an ideal but a fact, man united not by aspiration but by the love of God".

Secondly, because he belongs to a Christian fellowship which is concerned first of all with individuals — a fellowship which sees the roots of the world's problems "in the hearts of persons who must be born again". It recognizes changed men as the world's greatest need. In the words of one of the most able of the younger Indian Christian leaders : "To save the world is too gigantic a task for men who need themselves to be saved, and the whole programme of saving



men by changing their environment is obviously bound to fail, if ultimately it is impossible to change environment except by changing men". As an answer to the secular religions which are striving literally to create "new men" who will conform to the demands of exclusive totalitarian ideologies, he is impelled as a member of the Church of Christ, to work unceasingly for the renewal of men in the name of Him who recognized "neither Jew nor Greek" and who through His strength "maketh all things new". He will not strive less for the realization of so-called practical ends, but this thing he considers fundamental.

Thirdly, because he believes in an international order which is under the ultimate governance of God — an order subject to laws of relationship revealed by God in the gift of His Son. While the nature and functions of States do not permit of the quality in relationships between nations which is attainable in relationships between individuals, both are subject to the same Divine Order, and nations like individuals are under the judgment of God.

Suggested Questions  
for use in Discussion Groups in National Areas

1. What implications do recent developments in the realm of international relations have for my nation ? To what extent is the public aware of the issues involved ? Is there a marked trend in the direction either of isolation or of collective action ? Which of these would appear to be the wiser or more Christian policy for my nation ? To what extent is the Youth of my nation showing an active interest in or concern for any of these issues ?
2. What implications would the serious application of the principle of peaceful change have for my country ? What sacrifices if any would it demand ? Would my nation be prepared to become a party to such a plan in the interests of a more equitable distribution of resources and opportunity and a more secure peace ?
3. What is the dominant attitude of my people about the use of force as an instrument for the settlement of international disputes ? What position or positions have been taken by the Christian Churches of my country on this question ? What is my personal position as a Christian ?
4. What has been the most commonly held opinion in my country about the functions of the League of Nations in the realm of international relations ? Have my people thought of it in terms of an organization with sufficient "entity" to give a definite leadership to the nations of the world along clearly defined lines, or did they see in it merely a convenient instrument to be used by national governments in cases of emergency ? What is the present attitude of my people toward the League of Nations or some other form of international organization ?
5. To what extent is the Christian conception of "community" applicable in the field of international relations ? What are the practical steps which I, as a Christian, and the Christian Youth group or Movement to which I am related, should take in this connection ?

## CONCLUSION

If there is one thing which stands out clearly from the whole of this Outline, it is the strategic importance of the position of the Christian Community in the present situation. In a world divided between futilitarianism and totalitarianism, it stands for the one transcendent purpose and the one transcendent authority for human life. To a world of warring sovereignties, each of which makes the demonic claim to absolute supremacy, it brings the challenging message of the only absolute sovereignty — that of God ; to a world of bitter and irreconcilable conflicts, it brings the no less challenging message of the reconciliation wrought by God's forgiving love in Jesus Christ, and the call to receive it by faith and live in the power of the same spirit of forgiving love.

One other thing stands out with equal clarity, however ; and that is the fact that the message of the Christian Community — its witness to the one power that can save the world — cannot be effectively proclaimed by word alone. The futilitarians have lost any faith they may have had in words ; the totalitarians have given their whole-hearted allegiance to communities which not only speak of mystical visions but also act with decision and purpose for their realization. Our witness, as members of the Christian Community, to the sovereignty and the forgiving love of God, must be a witness of life as well as of doctrine, of obedience and devotion as well as of faith.

Yet one thing more appears from all our study — the fact that humanity is on the move, in a kind of

spiritual "Wandering of the Nations", searching for more life and truer community than it has known. Despite all its perversity, destructiveness, and sins against life and community, these aims underlie its efforts, and are thwarted only by its self-centredness, self-assertiveness and self-will. And the fact that this search for life and community is going on shows us the terms in which we can best bear our witness to the Gift of God — the more abundant life in the beloved community — and to the inexorable and revolutionary terms upon which alone that Gift can be received and that life and community founded.

Our faith is in a Gift of God which cuts across all human sovereignties and human desires, and sets something radically different from all of them at the centre of human life — the Cross of Jesus Christ, the conclusive expression of the sovereignty of God's forgiving love. It is there and there only that the demonic arrogance of human sovereignties is humbled, and that the sting of human conflicts is removed ; for it is there that we begin to see how God views our life, to realize the awful consequences of our arrogance, and to recognize the real pettiness of our most devastating conflicts. And it is there also — in the infinitely humbling but equally heartening perspective of the Love of God for us, and His way to victorious life — that we are given "the power of an endless life", and enabled to live together — really and truly together — in a way which we could never have discovered by ourselves, and which is far better than anything we could ever have imagined, for time or for eternity.

This is no mere rhetoric. The Gift of God is life. The Early Christians were known (before the name "Christian" had been invented) as the followers of "the way" — of life — (cf. Acts II. 28 ; IX. 2 ; XIX. 9, 23 ; XXII. 4 ; XXIV. 14). And the spirit of their

life was the authentication of their message. So it must be today. What we have to tell the world is simply this : that true life and true community are to be found, not by adherence to any man-made programme or party or partial community, but only by acceptance of and allegiance to the Way of God. And the only way in which we can tell it effectively is by the formation of "Christian cells" consisting of people committed to "the way", both to serve as working models of what true community life should be and also to act as radiant centres of evangelism.

This is of course the calling of the whole Christian Church ; and many "Christian cells" already exist. The only trouble is that too often theirs is a mere existence rather than a radiant life. The cells which already exist need to be wakened to living activity again ; and new ones need to be formed. For this is the method by which we as Christian Youth can best meet our responsibility towards the Church and towards the world. We have a very special responsibility ; and we have a position of great strategic importance in the spiritual war for the souls of men which is being waged in the world today. For first of all, we are better able than the older generation to adapt ourselves to the kaleidoscopic changes in conditions of life which have already taken place and will continue to take place during the coming years. And secondly, we are in touch with a generation of young people which has grown up quite outside the sphere of influence of the organized Churches.

The formation of living and aggressively active Christian cells is not a new-fangled idea but a return to the New Testament method of working (cf. Section II). There is unlimited scope for the development and extension of this idea : for the formation and building-up of Christian cells, nourished by Bible

study, prayer and the ministrations of the organized Churches through Word and Sacraments, and going out into society to act as the leaven within the lump in factory, warehouse, office, sports organization, university, army, navy, air force, and so on.

There is room, too, for all kinds of experiments in Christian living : for the extension into the economic realm of our spiritual community — a working out of the true Christian Community of possessions that we hear of in the Acts of the Apostles, and a devising of practical ways of expressing our solidarity with suffering members of the universal Christian Community — of showing that we are all cells within the One Body.

The materialistic philosophy of Marx has inspired men to do this kind of thing because it gave them a vision of power and glory in the future as a community. Surely the vision of the Christian faith should inspire us with at least as much self-sacrifice and devotion.

This thing has been done before. It was so that men were won for Christ in the first centuries. It is so that they will be won today. Our great privilege and responsibility is to call men from bewilderment and loneliness into certainty and fellowship. They will indeed have to be asked to make a great *decision* upon entering the fellowship. But they will neither make it nor have to keep it alone.

That brings us to the place of the individual in the community. Some who have read this document may have felt that his part has not been sufficiently emphasized. That is not so in intention. The thing which differentiates the Christian Community from all the secular collectivisms is that its eyes have been opened by Christ to see men not as trees walking or as "faceless numbers" but as living human beings,

each with his own unique gifts and tasks. Thus the Christian Community encourages the development of each individual within it. And the strength of the whole community depends upon the depth of consecration of each of its members. But the most important thing about it is that each of its members is forever delivered from loneliness and isolation : that he is surrounded and supported by, and responsible to, the Christian Community of forgiving love.

The conclusion of the whole matter is that we are today being called by God to give in the eyes of all men a convincing demonstration of what it means to be Christians. The fundamental fact about our situation in the world is not our human strength or weakness, neither our powers nor our limitations, but our being called by God. His strength is made perfect in weakness. His grace is sufficient for us, as it was for the little company of men who faced a pagan world nineteen hundred years ago. He has called us and He will complete His work in us and through us. For us there is no other course — seeing the greatness of the task and the urgency of the situation, but much more seeing the Sovereignty of God and His Forgiving Love by which He calls and chooses us — than to commit ourselves quite simply but quite decisively into His Hands, for His use, not as blindly obedient instruments but as gladly responsive fellow-workers and friends of Jesus Christ. If every one who reads this Outline, every group which uses it, the whole 1939 Conference, and all the Christian Youth which it will represent, will make this simple and decisive act of consecration, and work out its implications in every area of life, God will use us beyond our asking or deserving in His creative and saving work in the world which He loves and for which He gave His only-begotten Son. When we are ready to respond, He will show us His way.

## ESSENTIAL BOOKS

**That They Go Forward.** By Eric FENN. London : Student Christian Movement Press, 104 p., 2/—.

For Youth, this is *the* book coming out of the Oxford Conference. The Conference met as the churches seeking the Church and its function. Mr. Fenn makes plain the state of the churches and the task of the Church, and shows how the two are absolutely dependent on each other and how both are dependent upon God. Three chapters are devoted to the Church and the churches : the Hope of Unity, the Nemesis of Disunity, and the form of the body in which we "go forward" — Army and Rabble. Four chapters deal in the light of the Oxford Conference Reports with real questions for Youth : Questions of Bread and Butter ; questions of Double Loyalty (to Church and Nation) ; the question of the Church amid International Disorder : and, perhaps most important for Youth, questions of education under the title "Bond or Free". However, the book does not leave you with questions ; it points the way Youth must go — Forward.

**Edinburgh 1937.** By Hugh MARTIN. London : Student Christian Movement Press, 1937, 99 pp. 2/—.

In the words of the Archbishop of York, chairman of the Edinburgh Conference, this book is the "readable, accurate, and vivid" story of the Conference which, with Oxford and "Hangchow in India", is basic to Amsterdam 1939. In addition to chapters devoted to a résumé of the *Official Report* (which may be had in full, free of charge, from the Faith and Order Continuation Committee, Cheyney Court, Winchester, England), Mr. Martin gives an invaluable account of the process beginning in Edinburgh in 1910 and leading up to Edinburgh 1937. One other important chapter plainly sets forth "What Edinburgh Means for the Churches". That means *Youth* as well.

**Christianity in the Eastern Conflicts.** By William PATON. London : Edinburgh House Press, 1937, 220 pp. 2/6—, Chicago and New York : Willett, Clark & Co, 1937, \$ 1.50.

For the majority who cannot travel around the world, and who may not be able to go to Amsterdam, Mr. Paton gives an account of his journey, letting the reader see through his discerning eyes the underlying conditions in Japan, China, India, and the Near East. In the second half of the book Mr. Paton gives his thoughts about what he saw. One chapter especially deals on a world scale with the questions in the outline about the Church and the Social Order. The theme all the way through



runs parallel to the Christian Community in the Modern World ; he calls it "The World and God". At the end, Youth especially will feel with him that "we are living in a Day of the Lord".

**The Churches Survey Their Task, or The Oxford Conference Official Report** (American title). By J. H. OLDHAM. London : Allen and Unwin, 1937, 314 pp., 5/—. New York and Chicago : Willett, Clark & Co, 1937, \$ 2.00.

This is the book for those who, in preparation for Amsterdam, want to get behind all the books about Oxford to the Oxford Conference itself. Here you can see all the preparatory work, the meetings at Oxford for worship and work, and the outlook for the future, all through the eyes of the one person perhaps best able to discern the true meaning : Dr. Oldham himself. The book also contains the final form of all the reports of the sections of the Conference. These are compact, difficult material, but rewarding and necessary for real study for Amsterdam.

**Flaming Milestone.** By Basil Mathews. World's Committee of Y. M. C. A.'s, Geneva, 1937, pp. 115, 1.50 Sw. Fr.

In this book Basil Mathews gives a striking picture of an international conference of Christian Youth at work in an Eastern setting. It is the Report of the XXIst World's Conference of the World's Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations which was held in Mysore, India, early in 1937, but the introductory chapter and the interpretations with which Basil Mathews has introduced each sectional report give the volume values which reach far beyond organizational lines. Because a majority of those who participated in the discussions were from India and the Far East, and because the Conference dealt with most of the issues with which the 1939 Conference of Christian Youth will be concerning itself, this reflection of the mind of the East should have a unique value as a preparatory document.

**The Church and its Function in Society.** By W.A. VISSER 'T HOOFT and J. H. OLDHAM. London : Allen and Unwin, 1937, 239 pp. 8/6. New York and Chicago : Willett, Clark & Co, 1937, \$ 2.00.

All preparation for Oxford, Edinburgh and "Hangchow in India" revealed one common question, fundamental to every world Christian movement : What is the Church ? This book goes into every dark corner of the subject treated in this outline under the title "The Church of Christ as a Community" in terms both of doctrine and of sociology. In the second part of the book, Dr. Oldham explores all the relationships of worship and action between the Church and the World. This makes stiff but rewarding reading ; use it after the book by Mr. Fenn.

**Christian Faith and the Modern State.** An Oecumenical Approach. By Nils Ehrenström. London : S. C. M. Press, 1937, 233 pp., 6/—. Chicago and New York : Willett, Clark & Co, 1937, \$ 1.50.

This book by a Continental writer, excellently translated into

very readable English, lets all English-speaking students of this outline see the crucial problem of Church and State "from the inside" of several Christian traditions not their own, including the Orthodox and Roman Catholic as well as Calvinistic, Lutheran, Continental Protestant, and Anglican. This book will help the person who wants to go deeply into the material in this outline to set his own specific "Christian" solution of the relation of Church and State free of non-religious elements and into the wider framework of the Amsterdam Conference. It helps clear the way for the Christian solution which Youth must discover and apply.

**Our Faith.** By Emil BRUNNER. London : Scribner's, 1937, 153 pp., 8/— . New York : Scribner's, 1937, 153 pp., \$ 1.75.

Professor Brunner's book does a great service for almost every English-speaking person interested in the 1939 Conference at Amsterdam. Over against the American and English tendency to emphasize development, the worth of personality, and social matters in "our" faith, Dr. Brunner lets us see under thirty-five topics (averaging five pages to a topic) the content of his faith as a representative of Continental Protestantism. Some of the topics will make the reader wish the author had written less compactly, they are so rich in meaning. Here is genuine, stimulating help for all who have felt the need of "a creed to live by".

**Evangelism.** By D. T. NILES. Privately printed by the Wesley Press, Mysore, India, 86 pp. (Will also be published by the S. C. M. Press, London).

While it deals primarily with the question of Evangelism, this little booklet sets forth the outstanding needs of one of the great nations of the East as seen by one of the most able of the younger Indian Christian leaders. It should, therefore, have a distinct value for those who are planning to participate in any way in the 1939 Congress. The chapters dealing with *The Indigenous Church* and *The Evangelizing Church* have a definite bearing on a number of the sections of this Study and the document as a whole may be taken as an Indian Christian's point of departure for social and political action.

**Christian Faith and Life.** By William TEMPLE. London : Student Christian Movement Press, 1937, 144 pp. 2/— .

"Christian Faith and Life" lets the reader "in on" a week of lectures given at Oxford University. It makes plain "a creed to live by" as well as faith to believe in. Here are chapters on God, Christ, the Cross, Sin and Repentance, the Holy Spirit, Prayer and the Sacraments, as well as on moral standards and the Christian society. The reader will hear Dr. Temple speaking from every page.

**The Church of Christ and the Problems of the Day.** By Karl HEM. Charles Scribner's Sons, London, New York, 1933, 172 pp., \$ 1.75.

Because the Church of Christ in Germany is struggling so

violently to find its place in the midst of new and conflicting forces, this book by one of the leading figures in the religious thought-life of the Germany of today should prove a revealing document for those who engage in the studies outlined in the preceding pages. In the chapter on *Christ, His Church and the World* one finds a summary of Heim's thinking in the areas to which he has devoted a lifetime of study. One chapter deals with *The New "German Faith"* in a frank and realistic way. The dominant argument of his book is caught up in this one sentence: "If the Church of Christ is to be capable of entering the arena of the modern world, where the battle is going on for the soul of humanity, it will be only if the Christian Community displays the same readiness for sacrifice and disciplined will, as the men who have dedicated their lives to those other forces which are at war with each other".

**An Interpretation of Christian Ethics.** By Reinhold NIEBUHR. London, Student Christian Movement Press, 1937, 236 pp., 6/—, New York: Harpers & Brothers, 1937, 236 pp., \$ 2.00.

This book probes "the questions behind the questions" raised in this study outline. Any one who wants to explore deeply into the relation of the Christian Community and the Modern World will find help at many points, but three especially: (1) Just what is the ethic of Jesus (Christ's way) according to the Bible; (2) how is it possible for the Church to apply this ethic to the problems of the world, i. e., how are ideals related to life; and (3) how can I, as one who wants to follow Christ's way through the Church as His Community, disentangle myself from my particular religious tradition, Christian Orthodox or Christian Liberal? How can I "see myself as others see me" as part of my participation in preparations for Amsterdam, whether I attend the Conference or support it with my interest at home?

**Christianity and Our World.** By John BENNETT. London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1937, 96 pp., 2/6. New York: Association Press, 1937, 64 pp., \$ 0.50.

A few of the topic headings from the pages of this plain-spoken little book will indicate how indispensable it is for everyone who uses this study outline: Roots of Secularism; What Christianity Means; Christianity and Communism; Christian Ethic and Moral Confusion; Personal Discipline; Integrity; Christianity and the Economic Order; Christian Equality; Concentration of Power; Strategy of the Church; Modern Tyranny; God and Caesar; the Universalism of Christianity. This book is written out of the conviction that in the face of the modern world Christianity says the things which most need to be said.

**The End of Our Time.** By Nicholas BERYAEV. London and New York: Sheed and Ward, 1933, 258 pp. 3/6.

In the study outline the "new age" in which Christian Youth must now live is designated "Christian Community". This book, with insight that was prophetic (it was first written in

1919), treats of the same subject. The modern world, now in chaos, the author sees historically as the end of the period of history which began at the Renaissance, and for which Humanism was the philosophy of life. The "New Middle Ages", as he calls the new period of history coming to birth, are characterized chiefly by social as opposed to individual concepts. To help understand the new age, the author gives a keen analysis of the Russian revolution (not "good"; only "important") as well as of Democracy, Socialism, and Theocracy. This is a book to be read after the others... as a reward for the thorough student.

**A Christian Sociology for Today.** By Maurice RECKITT. London and New York : Longman's, Green, 1934, 286 pp., 4/6.

This is a shortened edition of Mr. Reckitt's volume entitled *Faith and Society* (Longmans, 1932, 15/—). Christian Sociology, for this author, whose style is clear and readable, constitutes the Christian judgment on all the forms of human society. Christian Sociology goes beyond mere Christian Ethics. The first chapter strikes the key-note : "Not of this World : the Dynamic of Social Redemption". Then in fine paragraphs and sentences, of many of which the reader says, "I've been trying to say that for a long time", he deals extensively and thoroughly with the subjects in which the student of this outline is interested. These are the chapter headings : Industrial Civilization and the Challenge of the Faith ; Politics ; a World Order ; Reality in Economics (including a good treatment of Motive and Vocation in Industry) ; and Freedom and Justice in the Social Order. The concluding chapter gives grounds for hope, for it holds that as Christians, we are given to see "Daylight at Midnight".

**None Other Gods.** By W. A. VISSER 't HOOFT. London : Student Christian Movement Press, 1937, 188 pp., 3/—. New York : Harper, 1937, 188 pp., \$ 1.50.

From wide travels and contacts with students, Dr. Visser't Hooft deals in this book with practically every topic touched upon in this study outline. He says of the book : "The first six chapters discuss the basis and content of the Christian life. The following four chapters represent studies in what might be called the 'foreign policy' of Christianity, for they deal with the Christian approach to modern civilization, to the totalitarian movements, to the intellectual world (especially the universities), and to one of the main contemporary philosophies of life (the worship of life : vitalism)... In the last chapter I have tried to describe what is involved in the missionary task of Christians and the Christian Church". Spengler was hopeless about our "West"; this book sees a road back to God. The road is marked "Christian Community".

**What is a Living Church?** By J. S. WHALE. London : Edinburgh House Press, 1937, 103 pp. 1/—.

A small but stimulating book. It is an attempt to answer the question which, as the author says, is obviously an urgent question for all who profess and call themselves Christians. It

has six chapters, each dealing with one of the topics for study chosen by the International Missionary Council in preparation for its meeting in Madras, November 1938.

**Oslo, 1936.** Report of the Twelfth World's Sunday School Convention. New York : World's Sunday School Association, 1936, 349 pp., \$ 1.00 ; Glasgow : World's Sunday School Association, 1936, 4/—. (The prices quoted are special reductions to delegates and collaborators in the Amsterdam Conference).

More than a verbal reproduction of addresses and findings of special groups, this volume is enabled by effective editing, publishing and photography to recapture much of the spirit of a significant world gathering. It is especially recommended to all those who are concerned with the world-wide outreach of Christian education.

## MAGAZINES

### **Student World.**

Published by The World Student Christian Federation, 13, rue Calvin, Geneva, Switzerland. Annual Subscription : 5.— Swiss Frs. ; single copies : 1.25 Swiss Frs.

See especially the Fourth Issue of 1937 and the Second and Fourth Issues of 1938.

### **World's Youth.**

Published by the World's Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations, 52, rue des Pâquis, Geneva, Switzerland. Annual Subscription : 5.— Swiss Frs ; single copies : 1.25 Swiss Frs.

See especially the January and April 1938 numbers.

### **International Review of Missions.**

Published by the International Missionary Council, 2 Eaton Gate, London. Annual Subscription 10/6, single copies 3/—.

See especially the April 1938 number.

### **The Churches in Action.**

News Letter of the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work and the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches. Published quarterly in English, French and German, 41 Avenue de Champel, Geneva, Switzerland. Annual Subscription : 2.— Swiss Frs.

### **Christendom.**

Published by Willett, Clark Co., New York and Chicago. Annual Subscription : \$ 3.20 ; single copies : \$ 1.00.

See especially the Fall 1937 number.